



HERBERT S. LANGFELD

BEAUTY

AN INTERPRETATION OF ART AND
THE IMAGINATIVE LIFE



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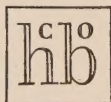
BEAUTY

AN INTERPRETATION OF ART AND
THE IMAGINATIVE LIFE

BY

HELEN HUSS PARKHURST

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN BARNARD COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



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TO
MARGARET CHASE RUNYON

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PROLOGUE

ART AS MAN'S IMAGE

ART IS the product of man—perhaps his only genuine and peculiar product. Of all his works there is no other upon which the stamp of his nature has been so indelibly set. Whatever else has issued from his brain and his hand has been under some practical coercion or suffered from some extrinsic limitation. In the act of artistic creation alone does he seem to have shaken loose from the fetters of circumstance and found himself suddenly free and glorious as a divinity, under no compulsion other than his desire to behold, godlike, the unclouded reflection of his own countenance. And of all things that he has contrived on earth none but art could be called the full expression of himself as a being compounded of flesh and intelligence and spirit. It at least constitutes such expression, reincarnating as it does in purer and stabler form the palpitations and raptures of his corporeal nature, the impalpable creatures of his abstract understanding, and the ethereal progeny of his imaginative fancy. So completely, indeed, does the correspondence obtain between inner and outer—between man's nature and the

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products of his creation—that from a knowledge of either, one should be able to infer the character of the other. From a study of the constitution of the human body and mind it should be possible to say what art, if it occurred at all, would have to be. And conversely, from knowledge of great examples of art, one should be able to predict many of the essential traits of man's physiology and psychology as modified by the conditions of his natural setting.

Nor should such a situation be cause for astonishment. Whatever complicating extrinsic and utilitarian motives may in the long history of the arts have contributed to their production, their ultimate reason for being resolves itself into the fact of the profound gratification which they mediate. But if this is the case—if the justification of art is its power to gratify—then since the means of satisfying any need must be conformed to that need, art could hardly be other than a complete disclosure of the deeper essence of humanity. For otherwise one would suppose that it must long ago have vanished as unsuited to its use. There is no problem, really, as to why the various forms of art should have occurred, or why they should be as they are and not different. The marvel would rather have been if they had not taken place at all, or if, taking place, they had been quite otherwise constituted.

As to the type of being from whom this human art has emanated, he is notable as rhythmic in his reflexes and in his organic functionings, subject to the coercion of the force of gravity and incessantly needing to combat that force in

all the postures of his body. He is a being woefully limited in the span of his attention and easily subject to weariness and ennui; restless, covetous of variety and change, and yet enamoured of the enduring and greedy to achieve permanence in all his possessions; a being fiercely desirous of maintaining himself and of imposing his will, vain, bent on self-aggrandizement, hungry for the infinite, but pitifully doomed to finitude, disillusionment, and defeat.

And if such is the creator, what of his creation? Is it not in all ways adjusted to his needs, intimately conformed to the movements and contours of body, mind and feelings, nicely adapted to beguile, to soothe, to excite, to exalt—in every manner to afford gratification? Its rhythms are the counterpart of his bodily rhythms, but shorn of their monotony. Its symmetries are the affirmation and evidence of a conquest of equilibrium such as his body yearns for but never undisjoinably attains. Its infusion of the unfamiliar into the familiar, its conjoining of variety and uniformity, of the arhythmic and the rhythmic, caters to his conflicting desires for the difficult and easy, for novelty and routine, for the impermanent and the permanent. It quiets his fears by transmuting into brooding and changeless forms of beauty all that he finds most precious and evanescent in the vanishing stream of the world. And at all times it contrives to render more benign the occasions for his laughter, more heroic the occasions for his tears, and to give semblance of distinction even to his shortcomings. Perhaps of greatest significance, through devices of repetition whereby past moments

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are intimately retained and commemorated, and future moments foreknown, art outwits nature by magnificently expanding the focus of attention and so promoting the illusion of irresistible mastery. It is thus the perfect embodiment of the deepest cravings—of the need for self-articulation, of the desire for compensation for what life lacks, of the passion to eternalize whatsoever for fleeting moments man finds congruent with his moods and predilections.

An art sub-human or super-human, animal or angelic, would be unpredictably other than any to which we are accustomed. A race of beings unassailed by fear of frustration or of death would fashion an art of quite unlike content and intention. One can scarcely conceive what substitutes for human themes of conflict, sacrifice, and disaster would offer themselves to artists for whom existence held no intimations of these themes of tragedy. Nor can one prognosticate the sort of comedy that they might invent. For human tears and laughter are the response to what could possess pathos or incongruity for none unconstituted like ourselves.

Similarly it would be impossible to foretell the character of the architecture or the painting or the sculpture that would be devised by creatures for whom there was no downward trend of physical masses and consequently no ground for deep satisfaction in achieved stability. Relevant to this issue is Leo Stein's suggestive comment ¹ that, so great is the emotional significance of the danger of falling, if we had been quadrupeds we might never have developed the arts at all.

¹ All citations and quotations may be identified by reference to Appendix I.

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A kind of corroboration of this fancy might be found in the case of birds by whom adjustment to the force of gravity must surely be sensed in a very profound way—perhaps more powerfully than it is by man, just as man himself experiences it more powerfully than any four-footed beasts. And it is birds that, next after man, appear to be the most aesthetically proficient of all living artisans. For the range of their activity includes after some fashion no less than three forms of art: dance, and song, and architecture.

But it is human art with which we are here concerned. Between birds—and perhaps archangels—on the one hand; and four-footed—and myriad-footed—creatures on the other, falls the domain of man, of man with his peculiar fitness to produce art in abundance and with his uncanny power to turn to account the very limitations that threaten to constrain him. Just how coercive and inescapable those limiting conditions are we seldom pause to consider. But in every instant of even the freest human creativeness they exercise their tyranny. Every recognized standard is the necessary outcome of one or another item of a huge system of constraints by which the life and experience of mankind is bounded. The human stature which is known to be very nearly a mean proportional between a star and an atom is diminutive as measured by stellar magnitude, immense as measured by atomic. Or rather it is by the norm of our own bodily size that we call atoms very small and stars gigantic. Our bodies are indeed the measuring-rod that we use for all spatial estimates,

just as the duration of a human lifetime is our standard of temporal magnitude, and our pulse and heartbeat the basis of our feeling for the speed of time's passage. The very weight of our bodies, which is strictly relative to the mass of the planet that we happen to inhabit, seems to us the proper weight for bodies to have. The day and year of that same planet we have come to regard as the objectively right length for a day and a year. And yet if we were transplanted to a different and much larger satellite of the sun our own weight would be seriously increased and we should need to accustom ourselves to a strange new cycle of hours and seasons.

To all things human, to all things earthly, we are then absurdly but fortunately adjusted. The accident—for such it must be—of a blue sky and green vegetation, of white snow and a sea whose tides are semi-diurnal, we are not tempted to wonder at. We should be deeply perturbed by the alteration the landscape would undergo if the atmosphere vanished, taking with it the accustomed modulations of light and shadow and leaving us, as on the moon, a midnight sky at noonday and a cleavage as by a knife between sunshine and darkness.² Habituation to a lunar landscape in place of our familiar earthly one would profoundly alter our standards; as would the substitution of a Saturnian with its sky spanned by a mysterious arch of brightness and ten moons to relieve the night. It is within an earthly, a human, scene that man weaves his tales and displays his various artistic

² See frontispiece.

inventions. And if the scene or the dwellers within it were very much altered all art would echo the alterations, as shapes within a mirror copy the changes in the objects of which they are the image.

Now the realm of this art as usually interpreted is set far too abruptly over against ordinary human activities, even those which are highly emotional or which entail the activity of the imagination. There are to be sure some critics who do not commit this mistake. Such writers as Havelock Ellis and Guyau have viewed life as pervaded with art, or art as intimately bound up with all the issues of life. But on the whole the domain of artistic imagination is not quite largely enough, nor generously, envisaged. Opportunities are too rarely seized for breaking down the barriers between art in the stricter sense of the term and that larger field of the less perfected, less esoteric, kinds of human creativeness. In any case it is this rather humanistic, rather democratic approach that is here to be attempted. We shall explore parts of the twilight zone that surrounds the realm of the more formal arts, taking account of humbler artists, of less finely articulated imaginative intuitions, of more pervasively and easily experienced delights. And all this for the purpose of seeing how advantageous is the softening of the sharp distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic.

This softening could of course be brought about in either one of two ways. It might come through a levelling-down process: an assimilation of the higher to the lower. One could

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say that the experience of beauty is never anything more than a very common sentiment stimulated in a multitude of ways and merely elevated to a factitious eminence by the pretences of the aesthete. Thus would be accomplished the merging of aesthetic and ordinary experience through a discrediting of the former. But it is possible also to make the sweeping assertion that human interests and activities are never totally devoid of really significant aesthetic character. Nothing quite so extreme as this unqualified assertion will here be ventured. It is merely in the general direction of such a pronouncement that we shall travel.

Meanwhile the arts in the more ordinary meaning of that term will be our primary concern, for the larger part of the present study has very seriously to do with art in its fullest and finest sense. We shall on the whole be concerned with questions of strict artistic form and artistic content, with the miracle of transcendent beauty and with the high moments of its contemplation.

CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES OF ART

TO ORDINARY human feeling, whatever in the world is most pervasive and accustomed—sunshine and harvest, love and birth and sleep—is likely to appear too ultimate and natural to need explaining. Concerning them we are prone to ask neither how nor why they first came to be. And among such presumably original and unmysterious realities art may easily be reckoned. For the forms of art, and especially their supreme examples, we experience as a miraculous counterpart, visible or audible, of our very selves. Splendours of great design, grandeurs of orchestral thunder, solemnities of carven stone, are, as it were, our own splendours, grandeurs, and solemnities. The outward causes of these deep stirrings of the spirit we are scarcely more inclined to question than ordinarily we are inclined to marvel at our own unmistakable reality.

But however appropriate in our moments of unreflective pleasure the presence of the rhythms and patterns and cadences responsible for that pleasure may appear to be, it is plain that if we envisage the realm of the arts with a desire

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for fullest understanding a problem of origins confronts us that we cannot wisely ignore.

The problem has of course been by no means neglected by serious students of human enterprise and adventure. Along with all manner of things to which concepts of genesis and of evolution have been applied in latter-day theory, art has received its full share of attention. But the problem of the origins of art as thus treated by historian, ethnologist, anthropologist, archaeologist, sociologist, and philosopher has most often been taken as raising just one issue: that of artistic beginnings either long ago in the early life of the race, or more recently but at relatively low levels of human development. Now naturally the arts, or some of them, made their first appearance at a remote date, among our savage or brute ancestors. And there must be reasons why they occurred at all, and in the sequence in which they did occur. But primitive man is far and shadowy. The examples of his handiwork are scattered, broken, and meagre. And, except through supplementary evidence supplied by the work of contemporary savages, little can be learned of any early arts except the spatial. Furthermore it is at least questionable whether living tribes who happen to be barbarous are fair examples, merely misplaced in time, of man in his pristine state. There would be ground for dissatisfaction, therefore, if the only approach to the problem of artistic sources were this long-distance interrogation of half-mythical creatures who are in no position to make reply.

Fortunately, a very different understanding of the meaning

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of the problem is possible, and one in no wise implicating a ghostly horde of strange artisans, long since dead. In pursuing the mode of inquiry appropriate to this second version of the issue of origins we shall, moreover, find ourselves committed, not to the difficult following of nearly obliterated traces through the trackless jungles of ancient days, but rather to the inspection of footsteps as fresh and unmistakable as marks left on grass white with the dew of early morning. But before engaging in this more alluring adventure we must take stock, however briefly, of the relics unearthed by the industry of those who prefer the archaeological method.

Among these findings, then, we meet first personal decoration. This includes elaboration of head-gear; distortions of the features; scarification; tattooing; adornment with rings, charms, beads, bangles, fringes. How much of all this is to be traced to magic and taboo? How much, if any, to the dictates of modesty? How much is a demonstration of pride in the body, or of desire to please, to awe, to dazzle—particularly members of the opposite sex? Such questions it is very difficult to answer.

Then there are the examples of the practical arts: pottery and complicated weaving; decorated implements and arms; fine carving and basket-making, and beaded and embroidered articles of utility. In much of this work beautiful geometric design occurs; and the immediate natural inference is that even if personal decoration is traceable to largely non-aesthetic motives, at least here a genuine feeling for abstract

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form and pattern is displayed. Many authorities do indeed incline to this interpretation, although certain others insist that in reality the seemingly non-representative patterns are all copies of familiar objects. Even where resemblance to such models is seriously lacking, the distortion, it is maintained, is caused by repeated copying with its inevitable simplification and conventionalization. One is in any case left very vague as to the main origin and course of development of the artistic impulse in these early manifestations. It seems impossible to say whether it owed more to the passion for imitation for its own sake; or to a genuine feeling for abstract form and a desire to perpetuate it; or whether, after all, artistic values were not rather an accidental by-product of happy exercise of skill.

As a third group of artistic phenomena, first in order of chronology, according to many writers, we find the song and dance: the dance solitary and choral; erotic, martial, and magical; the dance approximating to music, or to dramatic presentation, or to mere mimicry. Correspondingly we have song on the one hand verging upon the domain of narrative, and on the other upon that of orchestral music. And song and dance occur, each separately or both together, for purposes ritualistic, pantomimic, or orgiastic; indeed there is good reason to suppose that primitively these arts were a means of expression for all the fundamental instinctive impulses—objectifying and fostering the emotions of combat, of sex, of self-display, of love of life, fear of death, and all the sentiments of social susceptibility.

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Finally there is a fourth group of products, those which are the forerunners of the modern arts of painting and sculpture. There are carvings, painted designs, representations of war and hunting, renderings of all manner of animal and human forms on flat surfaces and in the round. These too, if their context and background are taken into account, suggest many possible explanations for having occurred other than the simple and tempting one that they are instances of creation for the sheer pleasure in it. There is the consideration for example that, at a primitive stage of culture before written language had been invented, representation of things and people and events had to be employed to communicate warnings, advice, threats—information of all kinds. Again it is important to remember that just as ritualistic performances were originally for magical purposes—to summon rain, to secure good crops, to vanquish enemies or to win in the chase—so also the graphic rendering of common scenes must at least sometimes have been with ritualistic or magical intent. For it is probably impossible to exaggerate the part played by magic and all its devices in the life of primitive peoples.

The motives actuating the primitive artisan even in the fashioning of really beautiful works must, then, often have been exceedingly mixed and complicated. Perhaps the roots of what among civilized peoples would count as artistic urges or impulses were present far back in the earliest stages of the race. If so they cannot but have been adulterated and modified to an indeterminate degree by the impingement of an

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environment totally different from our own; by the effect of different habits and traditions and conventions; and even by a different set of desires and needs. If therefore the study of primitive examples of technical skill is undertaken for the purpose of throwing light on the reasons why art originated at all, the conclusions to be drawn from that study must be extremely tentative. But in any case some such general conclusions as the following might appear justified: that the tendency to produce what may roughly be classed as forms of art is very old indeed; that at least in its earlier manifestations it was of a distinctly social character; that instead of being, as it often was in its later phases, a means of emotional expression isolated from ordinary interests and activities, it was normally integrated with the multiform preoccupations of the fighter, the hunter, the lover, the chronicler, the feaster, the maker of magic, the worshipper of mysterious forces, the deviser of implements, the sower of crops. We may feel safe in saying that man the early artist, whether singer or dancer, builder or engraver, weaver or carver, could not have been artist pure and simple, possessed by some mysterious urge to create; but man idolatrous, vengeful or lamenting; man playful, self-seeking, self-adorning, self-glorifying; man the social animal, the constructive animal, the animal that mimics; man the seeker after honour, man the strenuous, exulting in his power to be a cause. It is a crowded picture, revealing the wealth of affiliations of art at its root beginnings, but does it clearly declare the mainsprings of art in human cravings and impulses? Or rather does it not declare

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altogether too much? What are we to gather from such a mixed genealogy as the anthropologist offers respecting the relative importance of the various emotional tendencies and needs manifested by primitive man in the exercise of his multiform functions?

The problem of the origins of the arts is not, therefore, as we have said, one that has to do exclusively with racial history; nor is the only way of solving it through an unearthing of our remote ancestral past. In the last analysis, this problem has to do not with the group but with the individual, albeit in his social setting—with *any* individual: a man of the Stone Age; a woman of the twentieth century; but on the whole more importantly with a man or woman of the twentieth century. For while the question of artistic origins is at least as old as the first gratuitous refinement of a spear handle, it is also as modern, as contemporary, as the newest fad in painting or the latest idiosyncrasies of verse. And if what we want to discover is the characteristics of the human being that cause him to indulge in superfluous and emotionally gratifying activities, modern civilized man possesses this advantage over his savage progenitor: he is present in the flesh, capable of bearing witness to his feelings—susceptible even of laboratory tests.

Turning then from the retrospective or historical to the psychological attack upon the problem, we at once have at our disposal the many theories that have been advanced, in particular those that centre about a single human trait as the chief or only important explanation. Man's inborn in-

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clination to play has been so regarded; as likewise his sex instincts, with their by-products of tender emotion and romanticism. The basis of art has been repeatedly traced to his imitative tendencies and to his natural gregariousness. The characteristic variously called will-to-power, pride, desire for self-aggrandizement and self-assertion, has been plausibly made much of in the tracking down of art to its primordial roots in human impulse. Nietzsche speaks of it as

intoxication, the feeling of enhanced power; the inner compulsion to make things a mirror of one's own fulness and perfection.

The explanation of art has also been asserted to be the deep human desire to find escape from reality. At least one kind of art Nietzsche grants to be thus accounted for. Is art, he asks,

the result of dissatisfaction with reality? or is it the expression of gratitude for happiness experienced? In the first case, it is romanticism; in the second, it is glorification and dithyramb.

Even the passion for possession has been recently adduced as an explanation. According to Havelock Ellis:

. . . in creation we have not really put aside the possessive instinct, we may even have intensified it. For it has been reasonably argued that it is precisely the deep urgency of the impulse to possess which stirs the creative artist. He creates because that is the best way, or the only way, of gratifying his passionate desire to possess. Two men desire to possess a woman, and one seizes her, the other writes a "Vita Nuova"

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about her; they have both gratified the instinct of possession, and the second, it may be, most satisfyingly and most lastingly.

Now there can be no question that all of these deeply grounded instincts contribute in one way or another to what one may vaguely call the artistic impulse. To the wide reverberations of the sex instinct not only art but probably all other emotional phenomena, including religion, owe part of their impetus. An impulse as powerful as that of sex cannot but involve an overflow of its energy into neighbouring or related regions of experience. Especially when its natural expression is in any way thwarted there must inevitably occur a diverting of its energy into other channels of passionate expression. Artistic creation, with its chances for exploiting pent-up emotion, is peculiarly adapted to receive and make use of such subsidiary reinforcement.

And again man's innate playfulness, with its transcending of the distinction between the real and the unreal, has much in common with aesthetic consciousness. Indeed just as art serves as one of the substitute forms of expression for romantic impulses so also it may be said to constitute a finer and fuller alternative for other possible forms of playful activity. The fact that liking for art is sometimes attended by dislike of standardized modes of play, as games, by no means argues a deficiency of playfulness in the artistic type of person. Rather it might be taken as suggesting that the arts serve in an astonishingly complete way to satisfy cravings that would otherwise have found a very different kind of expression.

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And the social nature of man, his desire for sympathy and understanding, is quite clearly one of the chief reasons for his need to make feeling articulate. That this need must be very intense indeed is indicated by the persistence with which through speech he tries constantly to give his soul into the keeping of his fellow-men. Long ago Cicero testified to the force of this obsession when he said:

Though a man should climb up into heaven, and behold universal nature and the beauty of the stars, yet if he had none to whom he could relate it, that would be to him but a tedious spectacle.

If profound satisfaction comes from the approbation and sympathy of even the smallest contemporary audience, still greater must it be when, through the lasting products of his imagination, man finds a way of ensuring for himself the hope of an audience for all time to come. That hope beyond question constitutes one of the important motives for all, or nearly all, creative endeavour.

For the will-to-power as a dominant urge to creation an admirable case may also be made out. Without denying to man his social and altruistic tendencies, and without imputing to him any undue vanity, one may venture to say that the craving to assert himself, to expand his ego, to win triumphant assurance of his own reality, is very urgent within him. And while many a means to the gratification of this impulse is offered, there is none so suited to the purpose as the way of artistic expression. For here man is in a world of his own

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designing, here no external obstacles can interfere with the full exercise of his will. Upon this world as upon no other he may impose the laws and forms of his own feelings and volitions, and behold reflected as in a mirror the very drama of his inmost self. The conception of art as the manifestation of the human hunger and thirst after omnipotence is perhaps more nearly adequate than any other single and simplified interpretation.

As for the imitative tendencies of mankind, if they are granted to be indefinitely qualified by other motives, these too are unquestionably important in accounting for aesthetic activity. Taken in conjunction with the deep human desire to appropriate all that pleases, they are of particular value for the explanation of art's origins. The wish for everlasting possession of what elicits admiration will—if its direct and literal fulfilment be impossible—provoke an attempt to reproduce the admired object in some substitute medium. Nor need the resultant imitation be a slavish copy. Within limits the degree of its deviation from the original will measure the degree to which it permits of the gratification also of the will-to-power. For to originate, but in partial conformity with an established pattern, yields if anything a greater illusion of unlimited potency than could free origination completely unchecked by landmarks and limitations. In such restricted origination there may therefore occur pleasure in imitation pure and simple blended with pleasure in achieved possession; and with these, reinforcing them and receiving in its

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turn incalculable enhancement, there will be the pleasure attendant upon the exercise of the tyrannous will to be a cause.

And lastly, as to the motive of escape: if art were uniformly an idealization of reality it might seem more plausibly traceable to this impulse. Certainly all the glorified versions of the world might be so interpreted. But the artist is sometimes concerned too with tragedy, offering us heart-breaking pictures of the imperfections and pain that belong to normal human experience. Even so it may still be questioned whether explicit and conscious distaste for things as they are constitutes a very frequent or important motive for creation. Machen, indeed, goes so far as to say:

Art, you may feel quite assured, proceeds always from love and rapture, never from hatred and disdain, and satire of any kind *qua* satire is eternally condemned to that Gehenna where the pamphlets, the "literature of the subject," and the "life-like" books lie all together.

Perhaps a blend of the two contrary tendencies of flight and of rapturous approval is what incites the artist to his construing of the world in a manner which—there can be no question about it—is far more benign than the way of ordinary perception. As Nietzsche puts it:

Art is with us in order that we may not perish through truth. . . . The essential feature in art is its power of perfecting existence, its production of perfection and plenitude; art is essentially the affirmation, the blessing, and the deification of existence.

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Relevant to the problem of the sources of art as these various motives may appear to be, there still may be felt something lacking, and here Yrjö Hirn comes to our assistance. For what we really need is an explanation of how it is that an inner state of emotional disturbance should tend to objectify itself in some outward expression. For not pride, nor a natural pleasure felt in imitation, nor the social sense with its craving for sympathy, nor recoil from the hard and ugly realities of life seems to imply merely in itself any irresistible tendency toward a compensatory expressiveness. Even the inborn playfulness of mankind is devoid of any necessary implication of an overmastering urge to constructiveness. One wants to uncover at a deeper level than these manifestations some ultimate motive-power to account for their efficacy. One wants to know whether what happens at the level of simple reflexes happens also at that of fullest consciousness. At the lower level is the reflex arc, a mechanism for complete drainage, so to speak, of accumulated energy. It provides for an equivalence between ingress and egress of power. In the case of the simple reflex a received stimulus tends to seek and to take the nearest and easiest way out again along a motor neurone to a muscle. But is it not true that in the case of conscious behaviour also there is a correspondence between emotional excitement and subsequent overflow in expression? Surely man moves his limbs and raises his voice somewhat at least in proportion to the incitement to reaction within him. He leaps, shouts, laughs, weeps, unthinkingly and irresistibly. What we need then is a theory of art as a device for the

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drainage of emotion—a theory giving a more dynamic account of art's origination.

It is precisely this that Yrjö Hirn offers in his view that art is the outcome of a deeply felt need to win release from the overburdening intensity of emotion, a release more lasting and beneficent than that of mere spontaneous laughter and tears. Many other activities of course achieve this same end. As Hirn says:

The distinctive tendency to express overmastering feeling, to enhance pleasure, and to seek relief from pain, forms the most deep-seated motive of all human activity.

But as he further observes:

Art is better able than any of the immediate expressional activities to give complete and effective relief from emotional pressure.

Such an explanation of art in terms of the need for emotional outlet is in no sense a rival to the other suggested theories. Rather it is a postulate common to all, supplying a necessary basis for their various contentions. The problem it addresses itself to is the primary problem as to why, harassed by tormenting emotions, man should be impelled to contrive art at all. It serves to explain merely why art of some kind should have occurred. The more detailed problem is that of the occurrence of an art just so constituted as we find it to be. To the explaining of this the several theories that we have been considering make their divergent contributions. Each suggests a different perspective upon the emotional nature of man;

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each emphasizes a different emotion as the harassing one especially in need of alleviation. Indirectly at least each thus promotes the explanation of why the arts are as they are and not different.

But a genealogy of art as the hybrid product of many unrelated tendencies and cravings is far from satisfactory. The great works of human imagination seem too marvellously integrated to be properly accounted for in terms of any mere collection of motives. However fully these works may serve as an outlet for the many passions already taken account of, the simple unity which distinguishes each of them seems to point to some further element in consciousness which could more plausibly be regarded as their primary cause. For, as already noted, the great examples of human creation appear not as so many sounds and shapes mysteriously pleasing and consoling but as intimately known images of our very selves. What then in the consciousness of man can be the source of that extraordinary organic unity which the reflections of that consciousness display? At the very least we might anticipate some systematized functioning of those miscellaneous motives which the various theories of origin severally single out for special emphasis.

In thus posing afresh the question of the origins of art we are by no means suggesting an abandonment of Hirn's theory that art arose as the best means to emotional purification. Nor are we throwing into question the already admitted significance of the glittering galaxy of more specific psychological explanations. But no one of these former theories, nor

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all of them taken together, furnish a notion of the rich yet highly integrated origin that we are led to hope for. It would seem necessary to scrutinize once more the emotional nature of man at the same time very broadly and very attentively, and try to discover there the explanation we seek.

When we do this one fact about it compels our deep attention. Consciousness, as thus envisaged, reveals itself essentially under the semblance of a stupendous battle-ground across which opposing forces sweep and on which they come to grips and are alternately victorious and vanquished. The coveted dwelling-place of discordant impulses and desires, the mind of man, even in its moments of quiet, is encompassed by the lull that portends some yet further tumult. Conflict has been named the stuff of drama; it has been called also the basis of insanity. But it is something far too important and universal to be monopolized by either literary theory or pathology. Conflict is nothing less than the very essence of conscious life itself. Freudians have indeed diagnosed consciousness that way, yet the issue between Puritan training and animal instinct, or between what society would make a man and what he deeply is, constitutes but one of the fundamental forms of internal warfare. Sometimes it is, as it were, the will of the species that is at odds with individual preference and desire; sometimes the insurrection is of incompatible selves within the person; the material and the spiritual, the intellectual and the sensuous, the momentary and the eternal. Sometimes it is merely one deeply grounded passion in collision with an antithetical and equally powerful

impulse. For the stuff of consciousness appears as though composed of strands, each one tangled up with another of opposite hue and straining in opposite direction. Or it is as if by some strange emotional chemistry each mood tended to induce its own irreconcilable antithesis—love generating the seeds of hate, trust of distrust, rapture of agony, and agony of an ultimate and profound peace. And not only do the enduring states of emotional disturbance thus precipitate their own opposites, but within the feeling of each moment, however pure and simple it may appear to be, there seems to lurk the threat of a rival state. Contentment is shadowed always by the spectre of uneasiness or fear; desire is undermined by the dread of satiety; and within the throb of the purest pang of melancholy there quivers the promise of some incipient delight.

Among these deep cleavages, these tormenting dualities to be found in the life of the emotions, of greatest significance are those which result from the divergent appeals of the various active and competing attractions and repulsions. Excitement may be induced by the lure of the familiar, the predictable; but also by that of the strange, the unpredictable. We are beguiled by the mystery of what passes understanding; but we yearn likewise for the security and flattery of the comprehensible. Our natural feeling is for the simple and easy, and we resent what demands expenditure of more than least effort. But we are subject to the enticement no less of complexity, and of all that subserves the impulse to exuberant squandering of overflowing power. Our minds and

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our hearts are obsessed with a desire for the changeless, but we are propelled equally and oppositely to the breathless pursuit of the changing. We have a predilection for the orderly, the regular, the uniform, the harmonious. But some appetite within us urges us to seek out what is chaotic, untrammelled, unsubjected to law or order. And incurably greedy though we be for limitless self-assertion by any form of mirroring of ourselves, the craving for flight, for escape from self, incites us irresistibly to discover what is most dissimilar to our own nature and temperament. For each of us the relative strength of any two divergent tendencies must be somehow different. Even in any one person from moment to moment the balance between them may well be variable. Perhaps on the whole for every one there is some definite and fairly consistent predominance of one set of competing tendencies over the other, each of us being more essentially biased in favour either of the strange or of the familiar, of the regular or of the unordered, of the enduring or of the perishable. But if each individual is thus predominantly radical or conservative, romanticist or classicist, the resolution and synthesis of the two systems of discordant inclinations is never in any one altogether complete. Every person possessed of emotional vitality is everlastingly torn between the distracting provocations of each of these rival impulses warring within him and never achieves a thorough identification with any of them.

Now there are several kinds of experience wherein the incompatible passions within us find opportunity for at least

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partial unification. In religious emotion there are unquestionably blended the antagonistic feelings of exaltation and of abasement, and a satisfaction of the contrary cravings for escape from self and for attainment of a new and profounder selfhood. Again in romantic attachment the opposite propensities to mastery and to enslavement, to pursuit and to flight, to cruelty and to tender protectiveness, are all given simultaneous chance for exploitation. The romantic emotion itself is very certainly compounded of an irreconcilable love of the attainable and the unattainable, of the familiar and the mysterious. And finally, in the functioning of intelligence which operates to impose form and order upon the formless and the disorderly, there is derived a mixed enjoyment from regularity and system and at the same time from the inexhaustible richness of a reality that defies complete accounting.

But not the natural world, nor human relationships, nor any ordinary enterprise or adventure can procure for all persons the coveted satisfaction and adjustment of antagonistic desires. For those in whom conflicting passions are especially profound and irreconcilable, not even through religion nor through love is there possible without some disturbing repression the perfect synthesis of emotions essentially antithetical. For them, the less integrated, the more tormented individuals, there is one type of experience, and probably it is the only one, within which all warring tendencies are not merely preserved and harmonized but actually made to serve the ultimate ends of perfection. And this experience is the aesthetic. Uniquely in the making and in the contemplating of art are

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the discord and turmoil by which the human heart is beset somehow transcended, but without forfeiture of any richness of emotional content. Through art alone are the antagonistic impulses of consciousness fused into a divine unity wherein every whim is accentuated, every desire retained, and made moreover to seem necessary and reasonable and effortless. Through art as through nothing else that life offers there becomes possible a reconciliation of the cravings on the one hand for the uncomplicated, the easy, the regular, the familiar, the permanent, the predictable, and, on the other, for the complex, the difficult, the strange, the impermanent, the unpredictable. By devices unbelievably direct and simple, art accomplishes the swift and easy achievement of this end.

Of these devices through which art is thus moulded to the very contours of consciousness, reproducing the multitudinous currents of its feelings, the rise and fall of its secret and most intimate cadences, we shall have much to say later on. We shall need to inquire how it is that a work of art makes articulate our wordless impulses and gives substance and shape to the formless stream of our moods. We shall need to consider at length the manner in which all art is productive of states of incomparable well-being by reason of its imaging of the mind itself, albeit the mind purified, simplified, and harmonized. At the moment our concern is not primarily with the constitution of the work of art, nor yet with the precise results of its contemplation. It is with the question of the motive back of the original making of it. The view here defended may be condensed into the statement that

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the ultimate explanation of why man is impelled to imaginative expression of himself is that only thereby can he achieve a reconciliation of the discordant feelings and desires within him. This would imply that if man were not thus divided against himself he could experience not half so deeply the urge to artistic expression. It would imply that such art as he fashions is the natural and necessary precipitate of the wild sea of conflicting yet intricately related elements of which his consciousness is composed.

Such an interpretation of the origin of human art in no wise precludes the recognition that each creative individual may first have stumbled upon this means to emotional salvation in part at least by accident. It allows us furthermore to grant that his full discovery of his salvation may have come only after tentative experiment reinforced by imitation of his fellows and complicated by the following of a variety of innate and fairly simple impulses. All the theories that have been suggested as to the original motive responsible for the early products of creative imagination may be gratefully made use of and their truth acclaimed. The foregoing supplement to their various contentions may be taken merely as contributing two important amplifications. It may be taken first as suggesting how pervasive and deep is the unrest which precedes and is resolved in artistic creation; and secondly as preparing for a fuller statement later to be offered of the marvellous correspondence between the nature of man and the nature of his artistic inventions.

CHAPTER II

CREATION

WE SAY it is the same world that all of us inhabit; and for practical purposes of course it is. Yet we know quite well that if differences of emphasis and value and meaning are counted it is not the same world at all that appears to any two persons. To an undetermined extent each of us experiences a special and private version of earth and heaven and hell, with all that they contain of beatitude and despair.

This situation is quite natural and easily accounted for. From the outset, in body, mind, and temper, human beings are diversified. We differ in our receptiveness to impressions; in the quality of our imaginations; in the quickness and power of our feelings. Even the same felicities and the same disasters could therefore scarcely induce in any two of us the same effects. Oftener than not, however, the outward happenings are themselves not the same but incalculably diverse. What wonder, then, that there should be produced upon each individual a unique imprint of the world? The marvel really is that there should ever be sufficient community of experience to permit at all of discourse and ex-

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change and mutual understanding among men. For we snatch, each of us, from the ever-flowing stream of experience only what matches our mood, what feeds our pride, what corroborates our private hopes and fancies and delusions. All that is alien to us—too distasteful to endure, too incomprehensible to grasp—we pass by as if it were not; perhaps never deliberately, but simply because we are blind, deaf, insensible, to that which very painfully wounds our feelings or very flagrantly contradicts our beliefs. Thus by our attention and inattention, by our approbation and disapprobation, by our acceptance and rejection, we are day by day determining the constituents of our world. And the shapes that it takes, the colours that it assumes, are the clear and steady likeness of the inner pattern of our predilections. It is thus that we may in some sense be said to make the earth that we severally experience, fashioning it each after his own image. Creators we are of our respective universes; creators, which is to say—if we take the name in its widest and profoundest sense—artists.

Much of this the psychologist takes account of when he distinguishes between mere sensation such as is possible to the new-born infant—James's "blooming buzzing confusion"—and perception, which is that original sensation encrusted with meanings. And the psychologist is ready, too, to admit the highly individualized and private character of the total system of meanings with which each man invests the raw materials of his world. So there is good authority for the doctrine that mankind in its progress from infancy to maturity

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advances from an original, shared, but meaningless chaos to a meaningful but individually constructed cosmos.

Now immediate sensation and subsequent perception are applicable, strictly, only to the present moment; but strictly also for consciousness no purely present moment is possible—certainly not a capturable or cognizable one. We live from instant to instant in a flux of events, the substance of which has just been or is just about to be. Our only awareness is of the contents of past time or of time that is yet to come. What we carelessly call the present and seem to envisage immediately is in fact unseizable directly and therefore gravely subject to the aberrations and distortions either of memory or of hope. Even into what the psychologist calls the “specious present” there insinuates itself some of that *pathos of distance* which belongs alike to objects of recollection and of prevision. Still more, when located far beyond even the dim penumbra of moments just gone or just about to be, a person or a scene or an event is liable to the metamorphosis of reminiscence or surmise.

The world, then, with all it contains, is subjected ceaselessly in advance to the falsifications of incorrect expectation, only to fall at last into the domain of the forever irrevocable past which we constantly relive, but with constantly increasing imaginative aberrations. Actually, metaphysically, whatever has once been may pass silently and instantaneously into the frozen state of eternal changelessness. But as an object of awareness not even the future is more propitious than the past for the stimulation of creative

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activity. All that with the passing of time has vanished is, by us who look back longingly upon it, constantly refashioned and always into more complete accordance with the pattern of our inner selves. The emotions which instigate this unconscious transforming may be any of all those to which we fall victim: joy, pride, fear, avarice, and the rest. It is these and other emotions, singly and in their desperate collisions, which are responsible not only for the simplest kind of creativeness that we have been considering, but for all others. We should perhaps, therefore, without further delay take note of an important peculiarity of emotion *as such* which may help to account for certain of its most characteristic effects. This is its urgent demand for an object.

Emotion, says Santayana,

is primarily about nothing, and much of it remains about nothing to the end . . . objectless emotion chokes the heart with its dull importunity; now it impedes right action, now it feeds and fattens illusion.

Emotion, at least much of it, is about nothing, but it is clamorous for something to direct itself upon; and if an object is not easily forthcoming the probability is that one will be fabricated. And this is the very simple explanation of a large proportion of romantic, mystical, and other creative constructions. Now the occurrence of all objectless emotion can be accounted for by the fact that modifications within the body are alone sufficient to produce the various distinguishable emotional states. We might then suppose that there could occur objectless wrath, and fear, and melancholy,—even ob-

jectless admiration and remorse and ecstasy. And such is in fact the case. According to the Lange-James theory emotion is actually *nothing but* the perception of powerful organic and other bodily changes which, normally, are set up by disturbing external stimuli. But the theory takes into account also—indeed uses as one of its important arguments—those cases of bodily agitation for which there is to be found no outward inciting cause. In one sense there may perhaps be said never to be an *adequate* cause for any emotion. Viewed with the cold eye of reason there is an almost infinite disproportion between all actual objects and events and the stark terrors, the shuddering raptures, the miseries and exaltations which are the human response to them. But what we are now concerned with is such emotion as is objectively uncaused altogether.

Certain varieties of this fall within the domain of pathology. Persistent motiveless fears and malignant states of aggressiveness or melancholy are met by society with the precaution of medical diagnosis and incarceration in an asylum. But there are also externally unprovoked *benign* states—the pathological ecstasies to which all mankind is occasionally subject in proportion to its emotional unbalance. Moderate symptoms of this kind occur in any vigorous person in whom the currents of life are running strong and deep. Slight accelerations of the vital processes—intensification of the breathing and hastening of the heartbeat—may easily cause a beatific sense of well-being, a conviction of glorious fulfilment for which an adequate reason will be looked for in

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vain. We do not confine in institutions for the insane those whose states of beatitude are thus morbid in the sense of being essentially baseless. And yet this condition at least sometimes verges not a little upon madness.

The period of adolescence is one most favourable to the production of rapturous emotion which can find no object. It is consequently in this period that imaginative constructions, built up in an attempt to provide feeling with content, are most prevalent. It is in this period that there develops usually the strongest urge to artistic expression; the most pervasive tendency to be in love, not merely with lovable persons, but with love itself; the greatest susceptibility to religious fervours and extravagances. But in periods of life other than the adolescent all these types of spontaneous emotional disturbance may occur. And under the varied circumstances of normal everyday living occasions are contrived for the objectification of the excitements, the romanticisms, the vague feelings of drama and mystery that would otherwise go objectless.

Many of these homelier substitutes for artistic expression are of the nature of ritual—ritual being, as Jane Harrison maintains, the bridge between art and life. Even in our modern world many performances are beautified by it. Second only to the ceremonial associated with religious worship are the symbolism and other non-utilitarian elaborations which have been devised for patriotic and academic celebrations, and even for the conduct of the legal, medical, and other professions.

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Veblen is essentially correct in diagnosing many of the costly and useless complications of life as an assertion of the intense craving for display of economic power through the exercise of "conspicuous waste." But indulgence in expensive playthings, like richly equipped officials or elaborate machinery and red tape in the conduct of affairs—or most of all the maintenance of royalty—is not to be explained entirely by means of the self-aggrandizement motive. Much of it is an indication of unused emotions seeking an outlet in some form of self-expression. Much of it is a symptom, childlike, almost touching, of man's groping artistic proclivities. Practical necessity may originally have had to do largely with the creation of kings; and in the order of society and of nature those kings may have acquired wives and children. But without the participation of thwarted human romanticism which agonizes to discover an object for its tremors and its exaltations, a princess never would have attained in the imaginations of men her incomparable estate, half-fabulous and wholly poetical. Without the co-operation of poets she would not have attained it. But at least it is not poets who grant her a palace and sacrifice their own needs to indulge her caprices. Or rather it is the natural poet lodged deep in essential human nature that thus achieves halting and inadequate expression.

The decline in the world of the cult of royalty would seem to indicate either a dying out of the primordial fancifulness and romanticism in mankind, or their transference to more satisfactory fields. Perhaps the only ground for fear is that

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outworn customs and antiquated devices will find no worthy successors. But the slow-moving Spanish galleon has been succeeded by the deep-sea submarine; and in place of voyages of discovery to islands in the western sea we have aerial flights in the spaces beneath the stars. As civilization changes and man comes to weary of old triumphs, old toys and old illusions, he contrives, and will perhaps contrive always, new moulds into which to cast his pent-up fancies and upon which to lavish his imaginative devotions. There are indeed several domains in which are to be found perennial nourishment for the imagination and countless occasions for the exercise of the creative faculties. And these domains we must now survey.

The first of them is the domain of living persons. To the majority of mankind there are no objects which seriously compete with human beings in power to excite interest. But instead of attending to individuals in their actual rôles and endowed with the traits which they really possess, we normally project upon those who provoke our interest the status and nature that we desire—or fear—to discover. In this sense we may be said in some degree to create our fellow-men. In most cases the extent of falsification involved is measured by the vehemence of the concern that we feel; and any intense preoccupation may serve—great hatred or jealousy or dread no less than a great infatuation. The emotion, whatever it be, contrives to lend an abnormal significance to the words and actions attended to, so selecting and grouping them, so altering their import that a new and originally conceived per-

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sonality emerges. Not that any of us ever deliberately undertakes such a reconstruction of the persons we encounter. We cannot be persuaded to regard as in any sense fictitious those upon whom we lavish our aversions and our adorations. Like the dreamer of dreams we are all convinced of the solid existence of the personages we see. Sometimes, of course, when the discrepancy between another's actual nature and beliefs and those hoped for is too flagrant, we refrain from false interpretation and have recourse instead to attempted proselytizing. As Proust observes:

Sometimes we mobilize all our spiritual forces in a glittering array so as to influence and subjugate other human beings who, as we may well know, are situated outside ourselves, where we can never reach them.

The gratification derived from this enterprise of converting another to our ways of thinking and feeling may indeed be even greater than the gratification of supposed discovery of persons ready-made to our desire. It avoids the absurdities of such fallacious interpretation; but entails instead the evils of attempting to promote our own insistent prejudices. At bottom the two phenomena are perhaps essentially the same. Whether we merely falsely suppose that we find in others the perfect counterparts of our own imaginations; or deliberately undertake to reconstruct the *dramatis personae* of our life-comedy by processes of persuasion, we are projecting the pattern of our own inclinations upon other personalities. And we derive therefrom the satisfaction of increased assurance

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of ourselves, and the exhilaration that attends the act of creation.

In some degree most of us thus either try to convert or else manage to misunderstand the recipients of our friendship. As the foundation of this relation is less emotional than that of any relation rooted in some natural instinct or sanctified by institutionalized forms there is less occasion for the forcible imposing of an ill-fitting idea or ideal upon a reluctant and misjudged person. But since the perfect objective counterpart of our preconceived notions even of friendship is seldom encountered, some substitution of what we would like to discover for what is there to be discovered undoubtedly occurs. Relationship of parent and child, of leader and disciple, and all the other possible types of bond, both within and without blood ties, are candidates for the same kind of substitution of the imagined for the real. But it is of course the relation of lover to beloved that offers the most extreme instance of the phenomenon we are considering. In it we find, only at greatly heightened pitch, what occurs always when one human being impinges upon the rapt attention of another human being.

It is important to note that in this case substitution of better characteristics for worse is not the crucial matter. Indeed, trait for trait, there need be no preposterous failure of correspondence between the real and the apprehended. More than that, many a trait, physical or spiritual, may be perceived with far more instead of less than ordinary clearness.

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Whether actually important or exceedingly unimportant, certain qualities will, to the eye of the lover, stand out in high relief, seen and felt as small details are sensed in any emotional crisis; brightened and clarified like the elements in a landscape under the unnatural light before a storm. As in a portrait where some line of throat or hand, some high light on forehead or hair, may function as the focus of the entire design, so here almost any feature may be seized upon and made to serve as the centre of integration of the perceived person. A tone of voice, a trick of smiling, a wayward gesture—any bodily feature or spiritual attribute—may be the element upon which the whole romantic attitude may concentrate. And there will emerge therefrom a kind of unity and finality comparable to what belongs to any great example of imaginative art.

And the pure romantic quality, that flavour compounded of intimacy and a sense of strangeness—of the unutterably known with the unutterably unknown—belongs alike to the figure that preoccupies the lover's fevered imagination and the figures created by the artist's fancy. Captain Lingard, of Conrad's *The Rescue*, himself the incomparable imagined lover, is, like the living lover's phantasm, encompassed by the fierce brightness and impenetrable shadow of the romantic vision. So likewise the sombre, colossal figure of Captain Anthony in *Chance*. But even more notably than is the case with an artistic invention the glamorous quality by which the lover sees the beloved invested reaches, a quivering heat and light, far beyond the focus of his enraptured vision. Other

persons, the entire world, will for him be illumined by a halo of glory. We thus have here a very significant instance of the beautifying power of the creative imagination and its irresistible tendency to construct an object capable of satisfying numerous and conflicting emotions.

Another domain for imaginative activity is that of mystical religious experience. In considering this issue the metaphysical question need not be raised as to whether there objectively exists a realm of spirit corresponding to the intuitions of religious rapture. If there does, then more properly we should call the mystic vision re-creative rather than creative. If there does not, then we may interpret as sheer emotional phantasy the mystic imaginings. But the important point in any case is that what the religious enthusiast imagines or beholds is the very counterpart of his deepest cravings and hopes. The experience provides the most satisfactory expression of many emotions that might otherwise remain objectless: the less inarticulate admiration or approbation, for example, which an inner sense of vitality and well-being may generate; also the wide reverberations of a desire for intimate union with something ultimate and absolute; and all the vague disturbances resulting from a susceptibility to the mysterious, the unknown, the unattainable. In the absence of religious concepts and doctrines many of these feelings may find an outlet in all sorts of substitute rituals and superstitions. Astrology, numerology, spiritualistic investigations and semi-mystical therapeutic cults and practices may tap this fund of unused feeling. Or it may assume a more intellec-

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tualized form or a more aesthetic, and contribute to the urge either to philosophy or to art. But for many persons the only possible, or only natural, use for it is to be found in the religious life.

Ready-made religious dogmas and rituals—like ready-made games for the player—are at hand for those devoid of sufficient inventiveness to produce their own. The fullest experience of what religion may mediate will, however, like the fullest joy in play, come to those who reject the stereotyped forms devised by others and after the manner of the artist seize the chance for at least partial self-expression.

Its harmonizing and synthesizing of contradictory feelings and ideas is what makes religion, like art, so satisfying a substitute for the universe of ordinary experience. By recourse to it we can at once revile the world and affirm the utter goodness of things; declare man's unqualified moral responsibility and at the same time throw the burden of all upon a super-individual Absolute; assert the unimportance of this little period of earthly existence and yet insist upon the everlasting baleful or benign consequences of every thought and deed. All the paradoxes which our personal experience imposes upon us are through religion given semblance of adequate solution. The God of the mystic's vision contains within himself to an acute degree the antirational resolution of the concepts of omnipotence, omniscience, and everlastingness; of irresponsibility, justice, and mercy. And just as the fancied places of never-ending torment are objectifications and satisfactions of man's own vindictiveness, so the

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unquenchable joy of his seraphim and cherubim and all the other choirs of heaven are expressions of his own overflowing gladness and benevolence. In the religious experience there is scope for the divergent attractions on the one hand of simple, clear, and dogmatic doctrine and on the other of the utterly inconceivable: of the uncountable, the incalculable, the indeterminate and the super-sensible. As James puts it:

So we have the strange phenomenon . . . of a mind believing with all its strength in the real presence of a set of things of no one of which it can form any notion whatsoever.

Religious consciousness as it has manifested itself through the ages, particularly in the exaggerated form of the raptures of the saints, has involved a blend of the most highly particularized and sensuous content—odours, lights, voices and tactile excitations—with elements the most impalpable and imponderable. Of this trait the seer of the book of Revelation gives evidence:

And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

Like art the domain of religious vision provides the satisfaction of unchecked and exuberant imagining; it allows for undisturbed projection of inner states of rapture and fear.

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For its affirmations are inaccessible to any practical disproving in much the way that the space of a pictured landscape or the time of an epic is divorced from all relations to the space and time of ordinary experience.

Still another vast domain for the exercise of the creative imagination is that of philosophic theory.

Again, as in the case of religion, whatever view one takes regarding the ultimate validity of the mind's products in the way of comprehensive laws and abstract concepts, there is no question that the conceiving of them gratifies important emotional cravings. Whether couched in essentially metaphysical or in more empirical terms, the large syntheses and generalizations with which the human intellect may occupy itself supply objects serving the same needs that coerce the religiously minded in their search for a God. Whether one declares that all is water, or that all is fire, that it is infinite Changeless Being, or an eternal flux, or pure beauty, goodness or truth, or a prodigious illusion, in the last analysis, to the mind that so pronounces, it amounts to much the same thing. In each instance expression is given to the tumultuous human will that in its finitude and weakness agonizes for something absolute, infinite, and everlasting.

But not only is there an undeniable emotional urge behind the devising of the great unifications in which the abstract thinker indulges; the ferment out of which many of his concepts and theories emerge is, like that which incites mystic imaginings, a condition of fierce competition between incompatible intuitions. All the reconciliations of the divergent

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aspects of the world—the reconciliation of appearance and reality, of changelessness and change, of coherence and incoherence, of contingency and necessity—serve to feed and foster equally insistent but opposite demands of the intelligence. The very core of some of the greatest philosophic insights consists of a resolution of antitheses whose terms are experienced as ultimate and absolute. Of such kind is the vision of the universe as pervaded by one great law of the alternation and mutual attraction of opposites—an interpretation of things which accentuates differences at the same time that it asserts the most far-reaching congruities and connections. It flings together into one stupendous synthesis the fact of irresistible sympathy of positive and negative electrical charges for one another, and of the irresistible drawing together of bodies vastly disproportionate in size and incredibly distant. It throws into picturesque juxtaposition the various phenomena of the tides' response to lunar influence, the fatal attractiveness of a void for matter, of regions of cold for heat, and of the universal polarity of sex. It works into one comprehensive picture, stimulating to the imagination, satisfying to the emotions, all the rhythmic alternations with which the universe appears so rich: impact and recoil, condensation and rarefaction, light and darkness, rising and falling, motion and rest.

Again the concept of evolution as developed by Herbert Spencer provides the reconciliation of the divergent notions of uniformity and variety—a uniformity of process in the midst of wide variety of manifestations. His evolutionary

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formula postulates for the entire universe, all the way from nebula to man, a passage from a state of "indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity." Like a symphony or a dithyramb the theory rings the changes on one tremendous theme and provides, as would a work of art, a sublime object for hungry emotions.

Not merely desires but also fears and antagonisms may find expression in abstract theory and so yield a kind of austere gratification, just as pain, imaged in art, may procure its own catharsis. There is probably deep in all of us the terror of the vanishing quality of things, that quality increasingly impressed upon us as more and more is known of the instability of stars and atoms, of civilizations and the states of human feeling. As Heraclitus long ago pointed out, we can never step twice into the same river; neither, as we now fully realize, can a moon or a comet pursue ever again quite the same track through space. We find ourselves inhabitants of a world where repetition or even continuance of anything whatsoever is impossible. We fear and hate this impermanence, but none the less we are haunted by another and opposite dread—that of the everlasting. Premonitions at moments overtake us of the possible horror of an ultimate state from which there could be no rescue through the oblivion either of sleep or of annihilation. A conception of the universe giving expression to this double terror has dawned repeatedly upon the imaginations of men. It occurred to the ancient Pythagoreans and to the Stoics and Epicureans—and later to Nietzsche—a notion of the cosmos as in per-

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petual flux, and yet doomed in rhythmically recurrent periods to repeat its past cycles eternally.

The philosopher aims not at personal gratification but at the discovery of objective truth. And it may be that frequently he achieves his desire. But all the basic subject-matter of philosophy—space, time, reality, change, life, law, infinity, knowledge, substance—vague and grandiose as they are and weighted with emotional significance, lend themselves, almost like the stuff of music, to interpretations conforming to individual interest and need. Probably in all persons are to be found in some proportion the heterogeneous ingredients characteristic of the several philosophic temperaments: of sceptic and dogmatist, mystic and rationalist, enthusiast and cynic, mechanist and voluntarist, Platonist and Protagorean, hedonist and Puritan, relativist and absolutist. The philosopher is merely one for whom creative handling of abstract concepts and theories makes possible a reconciliation of these incompatible personalities that struggle for supremacy within him. It is his capacity to derive exhilaration and cosmic rapture from his peculiar kind of inventive activity that brings him into comparison with the true artist.

But the various types of creative enterprise that we have up to this point been considering are none of them aesthetic in the fullest and finest degree. All are adulterated with certain non-aesthetic elements. In the contemplation of the products of none of them can there be attained the large resonance, the beatific enthrallment characteristic of the creation or the contemplation of an art of the highest order. Even,

with respect to certain of them, objection may be urged against any insistence upon their likeness to the activity of the artist proper.

In particular with respect to a comparison between everyday, inadvertent acts of attention and selection and the inventive processes of the great originators such protest may be registered. For must it not be admitted that while such inventiveness as is incident to ordinary processes of individual awareness is quite involuntary and even unconscious, the enterprise of genuine artistic invention is purposive, deliberate, fully volitional? Surely, it may be declared, it is not accidentally or automatically but by choice that the poet achieves the felicity of the perfect cadence, the utterly right epithet; that the painter attains the irreproachable adjustment of colour and form in his design; or that the composer contrives the finality of exquisite melody.

But according to the testimony of artists themselves deliberate and controlled is precisely what artistic production is not; or certainly not invariably or at its most characteristic. An original tumult and division of the artist's personality against itself may be what initiates the activity and promotes the eager conscious hope for some assuaging of the tumult. But in some sense unsolicited and unanticipated comes even the initial inspiration, and after that its more concrete fulfilment. To this effect is S. Alexander's comment on the psychology of the artist:

I suggest that the artist's work proceeds not from a finished imaginative experience to which the work of art corresponds,

but from passionate excitement about the subject-matter, that the poet sings as the bird sings, because he must; that his poem is wrung from him by the subject which excites him, and that he possesses the imaginative experience embodied in his words just in so far as he has spoken them. In no sense is the poem the translation of his state of mind, for he does not know till he has said it, either what he wants to say or how he shall say it—two things which are admittedly one. The imaginative experience supposed to be in his mind does not exist there. What does exist is the subject-matter which detains him and fixes his thoughts and feeds his interest, giving colour to his excitement which would be different with a different subject-matter.

Irwin Edman similarly testifies:

Any one, indeed, who has ever written poetry knows how a poem often begins in the mind as a kind of cadence with a hardly specified meaning. Many a poem in the history of English literature has begun as a song without words that hummed itself in the poet's imagination and gradually took form and words and meaning.

To somewhat the same effect are Shelley's words in his *Defence of Poetry*:

Poetry . . . differs in this respect from logic, that it is not subject to the control of the active powers of the mind, and that its birth and recurrence have no necessary connexion with the consciousness or will . . . the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the colour of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our nature are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure.

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Souriau corroborates this testimony:

In general the first idea is not obtained by reflexion; it appears spontaneously in free reverie. All that the writer can do to aid inspiration is to put himself into the most favourable state for the spontaneous formation of images. . . .

I suppose that one does not merely dream but truly invents . . . nevertheless it remains true that the work is entirely spontaneous,—as spontaneous as can be the germination of a seed, or opening of a flower . . . One invents by free improvisation . . . Imagination proposes, intelligence and taste dispose . . . To gather images which present themselves is not labour, it is joy. . . .

If one subjected oneself to the program of never writing a line without knowing in advance exactly what one was going to say, one would never begin.

But even the phenomenon of ordinary speech, as has been pointed out by W. P. Montague, illustrates this principle of unpremeditated creativeness. He says:

In talking, a man does not and cannot plan out his words in advance. His sentences are not duplicates of what pre-existed; they do not repeat his thoughts, they express them . . . the meanings demanded by the topic under discussion are held by the mind in solution, and the words spoken are the crystals precipitated from the solution.

Inventing goes on then, the mysterious outcome of processes over which the individual appears to have little or no control—whose end he perhaps cannot even foresee. Not of course that effort is not often expended, or agony of spirit endured. But effort and agony are at most conditional accompaniments of an experience that is essentially one of raptur-

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ous discovery. In the travail of creation the artist appears to himself to be in no more proper sense responsible for the miracle which he gives birth to than a clear pane of glass is responsible for the tints of dawn and sunset filtered through it. He is as sublimely confident of the everlasting necessity and universal validity of his vision as are all we who, in the exercise of our natural faculties, fatuously believe that we grasp the very substance of reality.

This would seem to mean that above all others the artist is the victim of a colossal illusion: that indeed art is essentially in all its import an instrument for the initiation and fostering of illusion. We shall later argue the question of the illusoriness of the mere observer's experience, the false sense that he has of being at least partly responsible for the pulses of rhythm, the alternating tides of strain and relaxation that pass through him. But what we are now interested in is the first chapter of the story: the magnificent fallacy of the creator that he is but rapturously hailing something whose rightness and necessity must have been from the foundations of the world.

But is this after all a fallacy? May it be perhaps not illusion but a very important kind of revelation that occurs in all the other varieties of imaginative creativeness that we have been considering: in the selective processes of ordinary attention; in the entrancement of the lover, the enraptured vision of the mystic, the stupendous unifications of the philosopher, and at last the splendid dream of the artist? In so far as all these experiences involve a mirroring of living con-

sciousness they are of course true in the sense of duplicating a very significant reality. But a wider and deeper truth even than that of self-expression may be here at issue. Perhaps it is not common sight but glorified vision that is true seeing. Perhaps only in the heightened state of feverish imagination in which incomparable significances are apprehended can there be anything like genuine knowledge. This would mean that of the two ways of perceiving other persons it is not the version of cool reasonableness but of impassioned appreciation that is the valid one; and that of the two ways of envisaging the world it is the seeing of it "under the aspect of eternity," and pervaded with incredible beauty, that penetrates to its true nature.

Whatever one's notion of the objective validity of pre-aesthetic and aesthetic creativeness may be, there is in any case no question about the views and the desires of the artist himself, in the torment and ecstasy of creation. Collingwood declares that the artist

paints with one motive only: that he may help himself to see, and to see in the sense of to imagine.

What he would do is to distill experience and from it derive a liquid clarified and translucent; and then from that distillation yet again to purify and concentrate; until passing from purification to purification he may reach the single phrase, the single form, the one incomparable rhythm or cadence epitomizing the rapture that pervades him. A fantastic but inescapable obsession! It implies no less than the unrealizable

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hope of first transfixing the stream of flowing, kaleidoscopic experience and then of creating or discovering a mould into which that pure liquid may be poured without spilling the crystal drops, without altering their colour or destroying their rare aroma at the moment of transference. A fantastic hope, a mad but lovely dream! But the artist is the dreamer *par excellence*, the dreamer

consenting to dream of the actual world; . . . a highly suggestible mind hypnotized by reality.

And his dream comprehends some of the most fundamental of desires. Like the lover he longs for complete identification with the object of his adoration; like the God-intoxicated he craves the "tongues of men and of angels" to win the world to a sharing in the revelation vouchsafed him; like the philosopher he passionately hopes to achieve for his vision finality and permanence; and like all men he desires, not momentarily but throughout the length of his days, the perfect articulation of his feelings through modes of expression corresponding precisely to the objects of his awareness. But unlike ordinary persons—unlike even the greatest lovers and saints and seers—he has at his command a domain of things incomparable for their responsiveness to his creative touch. And from the rest of humanity he is set apart by virtue both of the deficiencies and of the super-abundance of his endowment; he is at once more blessed and more cursed than all his fellows.

He is more blessed in that his sensuous consciousness is more than normally voluminous and intense, his emotions

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far readier to be stirred, his fancy to soar. His greater delicacy of discrimination widens incalculably the range of distinguishable qualities in the world and the amplitude of their significance. The artist is thus in more than common measure self-sufficient. Life as it goes on about him is already drama, nature already a landscape or a poem, and one which no work of man could ever hope to emulate. In solitude he is never lonely; it is in a crowd rather that he finds himself alone. More nearly than any other type of social human animal he can dispense with companionship.

But not permanently, nor ever quite completely. His sublime indifference to his fellow-men in hours of labour and inspiration is balanced by a specially helpless and pathetic need for ultimate human approval. The artist except in rare instances is cursed with an even more than normal passion for the world's esteem. He pays for his arrogance and self-sufficiency by gambling sometimes his very sanity and existence, certainly his peace of soul, against the winning of an endorsement whose value should mean little more than petty flattering of his vanity. Lalo has well expressed this. He says:

. . . aesthetic consciousness has its satisfactions and remorse, its austerities and sins, its revolts and surrenders, its exquisite shames . . . in short its positive and negative sanctions: glory and admiration, or unsuccess and ridicule. As for the moral man and the scholar, these are for the artist merely a distant goal which it is dangerous to aim at too directly, but whose existence is none the less felt subconsciously . . . as a crowning,—a superfluous one moreover as to which each artist likes to bear witness that it adds nothing to the

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worth of his works or his acts, although it possesses the highest price of all, and although the recluse the most disdainful of the crowd and the most jealously enclosed in his tower of ivory owes in spite of himself to that secret influence the irresistible impulse which leads him to sacrifice his life for the triumphing of his ideal,—which is to say unquestionably to make those same men adopt it whom he professes to scorn.

But his almost ignominious dependence upon earthly sanction is not the only reason why the artist is to be pitied as well as envied. Within himself he carries not merely rich provision for contentment but also, and perhaps even more notably, the grounds for unexampled disruptions; he is more hopelessly enamoured of discrepant goods than are any of his fellows, more bleedingly torn between incongruous predilections, more feverishly excited by incompatible allurements, more enslaved by the discordant demands of opposite cravings. Upon his mind and feelings is exerted with terrible intensity the appeal of order and also of chaos, of the enduring and of the ever-changing, of the familiar and the strange, of the sensuous and the utterly bodiless. More than any other kind of mortal he stands in acute need of the healing which creative activity may bring. And this, of course, at least for moments he may attain. But the lamentable fact remains that he is

an artist only for short times; he turns artist for a while like a werewolf, and for the rest of the time he only carries marks by which the instructed may recognize him . . . his hour passes . . . the artist becomes once more an ordinary mor-

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tal, the poorer in that he has utterly lost the vision which was all in all to him and is haunted by that homesickness for the ideal which every artist knows too well.

But there is one sort of joy that can never be taken from him, which he retains even when his own imagination falters, his own wings droop and fail. That is the professional's delight in medium and technique—in all the conventions, forms, and technical details and difficulties of his own particular art. In the opinion of Lalo it is this kind of pleasure rather than the gratification of any more animal or human needs and impulses that constitutes the essence of the aesthetic experience. Probably for the creative artist this item of concern is of still greater significance. Commenting upon the psychology of the painter, Bosanquet remarks:

I take it, there is a pleasure in the brush stroke, which is *also* a sense of success in the use of the medium, and of meaning in hitting the exact effect which he wants to get. We common people have something analogous to all this, when we enjoy the too-rare sensation of having found the right word.

Lalo makes an even more sweeping generalization:

Technique is like a language, become for the aesthetic consciousness of the artist what the mother tongue is for the thought of the herd.

An inexhaustible source of technical and somewhat esoteric gratifications there is then in the special conventions and forms of all the arts. A poet may continue to take an almost fantastic delight in a cadence, a metrical form, a rare juxta-

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position of words or a mere succession of meaningless syllables, even in his hours of relative inexpressiveness. To a still greater extent the musician has at his command an endless supply of technical appreciations. Even in moments of un-inventiveness he may exult over his store of materials and devices, finding mysterious pleasure in complexities of single tones, in intricacies of tone relations and tone production, and in all the abstract conventions of musical form.

But it is the other side of his art that is the chief ground both of the artist's joy and of his sorrow: its expressiveness, the opportunity it offers for indulging in the delights of unchecked utterance. This aspect of his special kind of experience is the occasion for pain when vision is clouded and invention abortive. But when all goes well the creator, whatever his medium, may echo the rapturous words of Shelley:

To feel all that is divine in the green-robed earth and the starry sky is a penetrating yet vivid pleasure which, when it is over, presses like the memory of misfortune; but if you can express those feelings—if, secure of sympathy (for without sympathy it is worse than the taste of those apples whose core is as bitter aloes), if thus secure you can pour forth into another's most attentive ear the feelings by which you are entranced, there is an exultation of spirit in the utterance—a glory of happiness which far transcends all human transports, and seems to invest the soul as the saints are with light, with a halo untainted, holy, and undying.

But language mystical and pagan, sensuous and spiritual, must all be brought into service to describe the state of him who in the capacity of artist has drawn near to beauty, who

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has embraced its form, and tasted upon his lips its rare breath. His state is blessed, and he knows perhaps the purest rapture that is vouchsafed to mortal, for of him alone can it be said that

he on honey-dew hath fed
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

CHAPTER III

SENSUOUS QUALITIES OF THE WORLD

BY THE artist every tremor of every sense is felt as infinitely significant. Sufficiently provocative for the most rapturous utterance is the call of a bird, the flutter of a leaf, the pure profile of a hill against the sky, the faint breath exhaled from a flower petal. Somewhat surprising then it is that one of the oldest and oftenest disputed problems in the theory of the arts is that of the demarcation of the human senses into the higher and the lower—the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic. Now if the matter be argued under the guise of the question whether there could ever be a serious and self-sufficient art of odours or of tastes or of merely tactual qualities, the answer is of course easily in the negative. But that after all is a fairly superficial and foolish form of the question. The real and important issue is whether sweet and bitter, wet and dry, warm and cold, and all the myriad appeals to those close and intimate senses of neither the visible nor the audible can play a significant part in the emotional and imaginative life, not of the artist only, but of all men. And of course they both can and do. There are, however, certain un-

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derstandable reasons for the traditional setting apart from sight and hearing of the domain of the other senses, and these we should at least briefly consider.

A first, obvious reason, yet one perhaps really unimportant, is the quicker exhaustibility of the organs mediating fragrance and flavour. The qualities experienced fade rapidly away and restimulation of the sense organ fails to prolong the original essence. Either intensity or fineness of discrimination is invariably forfeited. But this after all has no bearing whatsoever upon the significance of the first encounter, however fleeting that may have been. We may not measure delight in feet or fathoms, and one moment of rapture may easily outweigh in importance a millennium of vacancy. It might be that a perceived perfume, though vanishing as a sigh, perishing as an echo, could exceed in richness and volume of meaning the entire gamut of tones and colours.

A possibly more serious circumstance, but one growing out of that just mentioned, is the lack of integrity belonging to flavours and odours that immediately succeed one another. They blend, losing all clear demarcation in such manner that anything analogous to a melody contrived from these qualities is unthinkable. And not only is it that in actual sequence they hopelessly coalesce. Their intrinsic unrelatedness of character would forever preclude even their theoretical arrangement into hierarchical or other relational groupings as in the musical scale. One cannot discover in the entire domain of the olfactory and the gustatory two elements exhibiting

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that mysterious relation of identity within difference belonging to C and E, to C and G, or, still more remarkably, to C and its octave. Even discord such as results from a half tone or from a seventh is unimaginable. Equally absent is anything analogous to degrees of either spatial or qualitative *distance* between them. From such a sequence as tuberoses, syringa, hyacinth, and jasmine, or geranium, orange-blossom, lilac, and heliotrope, no effect of a curve or of a musical progression is forthcoming.

But for such circumstances as these to be fatal to the postulate that perfume may be deeply, imaginatively significant there is necessary the assumption whose truth cannot very easily be demonstrated that complexity, either simultaneous or successive, is prerequisite. Against this dubious thesis Plotinus long ago protested. If, he exclaimed,

only a compound can be beautiful, never anything devoid of parts . . . all the loveliness of colour and even the light of the sun, being devoid of parts and so not beautiful by symmetry, must be ruled out of the realm of beauty. And how comes gold to be a beautiful thing? And lightning by night, and the stars, why are these so fair?

One may indeed question whether only what is built up of intricately related elements is a candidate for imaginative appreciations. Why not also the thing of infinite simplicity? If this doubt is well-grounded then not their mere incapacity to combine into sequences or patterns could establish the unmeaningfulness of the perceptions yielded by the two de-

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spised senses. Some further indictment would be necessary for their discrediting. And there is in fact a further serious complaint that has been lodged against them.

Taste and smell sensations are, it is urged, mediated by senses primitive in the order of racial development, and intimately bound up with the life of the body, subserving its animal needs. They require a physical drawing close to the stimulus,—an actual impact with it, or even its literal absorption into the organism. And corresponding to this manner of stimulus—sharply contrasted with that of the distance receptors of sight and hearing—there is said to go an absence of reflective detachment, a too great closeness of awareness and feeling. This, one should note, would be to admit, in fact to insist upon, the immediacy and intensity of the emotional response to the qualities in question. But may one therefore infer that those qualities are to be excluded from the domain of imaginative experience?

The only possible settlement of the question would be by way of introspection, one's own and others'. We should need to find indubitable instances of significant stirrings of the mind and the feelings by smelled and tasted qualities of the sensuous world. And of these there is no lack of testimony, both in art and out of it. Guyau made a memorable defence of the high emotional values of the combined experience of temperature and taste as illustrated by a glass of milk drunk on a mountain top after a hot and difficult climb. This case might seem to be an ambiguous one. For presumably he was at the same time feeling upon his skin the cold winds of those

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upper spaces; feasting his eyes upon a wide and beautiful panorama of country below him; and possibly receiving a rich complex of sensations: sound and lights and sweetness replete with poetic associations. The drink very possibly stood out as the element in the complex which satisfied a deeply felt animal need, and so appropriated all the values actually belonging to its more significant accompaniments.

But this is by no means to dispose of the case. Sensations seldom if ever come singly, and perhaps the capacity of a sensory quality to attract to itself the meanings of a number of scattered perceptions, thus producing an effect of emotional unity, is just the needed proof of its aesthetic significance. A state in which an element is accented, seeming to serve as the focus and centre of radiation of a system of marvellously fused accessory elements, is certainly very like the experience obtained from the contemplation of a work of art. If a taste of the fruity or bitter, if a whiff of earthiness or damp greenness, of flowery sweetness or the exotically musky and pungent, can precipitate a condition of dreaminess or depression, of wistfulness or exhilaration, through which images from other senses float, and along which pass currents of fancy and cumulative reverie, how can there be question of its high import?

There is, to take account of, the fact that the memory for aromas is extraordinarily retentive, accurate, and capable of bearing along with it the very heavy burden of associated memory images. Every one at times has had the startling sense of an entire past scene re-created by virtue of some en-

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counter with an odour apparently insignificant. Olfactory memories appear to be capable of retaining their vividness and freshness through a long period of burial in the deeper levels of the mind, together with a power, without warning, on the instant, to reinstate the original experience in all its first violence.

Now it ought not to surprise us that both the original experience and its revival should be excessive in strength. For the sense of smell, next after the tactual, was probably among the earliest of the primitive organism's means of response to its environment. It might be anticipated then that—provided the sense organ had not atrophied altogether, its use being outgrown—its survival would be marked with at least occasional eruptions of feelings brute-like in their force. And it does indeed appear that the reverberations which may be set up through this avenue of stimulation are far-resounding, seeming to awaken echoes of some long-lost primeval emotions; ancient and savage hungers and terrors, fierce aversions and delights.

The primitiveness perhaps, certainly the emotional effectiveness of sensations of taste and smell, as Guyau and others have pointed out, have been most convincingly evidenced by the practice of poets. In poetry in great abundance we find the employment of images derived from these humble senses whenever the making sensuously real and vivid of what belongs to the domain of the visible and the audible appears especially difficult. Even in every-day speech concentrated metaphors in the form of epithets bear witness to the preva-

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lence and need of translating all kinds of ideas and qualities into gustatory and olfactory terms. The wide and varied metaphorical application of such words as sweet and bitter—still more perhaps the names for qualities derived from tactual and kinaesthetic experience: hard, soft, cold, sharp, biting and tender; and languishing, drooping, swooning, brooding—proclaim our constant dependence in thought and speech upon the more bodily senses.

Turning now from the two related senses yielding odours and flavours to these other primitive sources of sensory content, we must inquire whether they too may be defended as aesthetically significant.

Against touch at least the argument of formlessness, of lack of structure, cannot be directed. Tactual qualities are a primitive, and remain a permanent, means of apprehension of size and shape. In the process of their gradual fusion with other qualities they become indeed so bound up with those of sight that blind handling of familiar things produces a no less complete realization of their appearance than of their form and dimensions. Conversely, the mere visual appearance of an object is sufficient to stimulate clear images of temperature, texture, and resistance.

Modern aesthetic theory has taken account of these facts and may even be said to have promoted the tactile and kinaesthetic senses to a position of dignity beside those of sight and hearing. Berenson attributes much of the greatness of Giotto to his powerful appeal to the sense of touch with its accompanying suggestions of pressure and strain. The reali-

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zation of solidity, of substantiality, resulting from this addition to the purely visual effect, produces, he declares, a feeling of incredible life-enhancement.¹

But this is only what should have been anticipated, since the tactile sense is the reality sense *par excellence*. From childhood forward we assist, when we can, our visual knowledge of things with their acquaintance through handling. The final unimpeachable assurance of the existence of an object is indeed withheld so long as we are deprived of this primitive direct approach. Groups of sensations probably originally become *things* chiefly by reason of this corroboration of visual appearance by physical contact. To the last we remain dubious as to the reality of what is intangible, while in cases where definite expectations of certain sensations of temperature, weight, or texture are set up, the reception of quite other qualities, or the failure to receive any tactual sensation at all, produces a baffled uneasiness which may rise to the shrill pitch of terror. And at the other end of the gamut of human emotions—as removed as possible from the sense of frozen fear—is to be found warm tenderness, the wistful awareness of intimate union with persons or things cherished, that may be fostered through this same experience of contact. What we care for, if the caring is bound up with qualities of touch, will be doubly, trebly, missed when it is taken from us. It is a question whether the loss of a little child or of a pet animal upon which protective fondling has been lavished could leave behind a sense of void so aching and poignant were it not

¹ See illustration 3.

that, besides the heart, the hands and the embracing arms are left yearning and empty.

Among the amazing products of stimulation of the skin's sensitive nerve endings are then horror at one extreme, spiritual tenderness at the other. A wide range of other feelings lies between. There are simple and gentle pleasures: from the yielding of thick-pile velvet, from the down on the neck of a bird; from the cool smoothness of rose petals, the chill of marble, the resilience of damp moss, the vital softness and warmth of human flesh itself. There are also the pleasures dependent in part on associated attributes of colour, or design, or even on historical or semi-romantic connections: the appeal of carved ivory, for example, or of lacquer; of painted silk, and heavy embroidery; of enamel, and of the soft rich beaten gold of an Egyptian bracelet or a Visigothic crown.

In view of the varied emotional significance of tactual sensations and of their combining power with qualities derived from sight, there would therefore seem to be little room for doubt as to the propriety of locating the tactile and kinaesthetic senses in the same class with the organs that mediate colour and sound. Sufficient indication has been given of the intensity and volume of the sentiments engendered in this lowly way.

So much for the controversial aspects of the subject. What we want now to do is, entirely without disputation, with at the moment nothing at issue to be proved or disproved, to survey the rich welter of sensory qualities which, be we crea-

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tive artist or only common mortal, await us in the natural world for our delight.

For the discovery of much of this it is not necessary to range far afield from the paths of ordinary living. To the humblest places come sunshine and frost, wind and rain and starlight. Certain particularly rich and significant complexes of sensation are of course procurable only by the specially circumstanced; the colours and odours, sounds and silences of remote and romantic regions of the earth. Few of us may achieve the modern equivalent of feasting upon nightingales' tongues or quenching our thirst with pearls dissolved in wine. To the majority the stillness of the jungle, the wideness of the desert, the splendour of the midnight sun and the mad fury of a typhoon must remain in the category of dream and literary tradition. But all of us who choose may witness the shining length of the day unroll at least somewhere on land or sea, and after that share in the watches of the sombre and glittering night. And intimate knowledge of the moods of spring and autumn, of sky and earth, is to be had by any who will.

For it requires after all but a single occurrence, provided only we passionately attend, to transform an exquisite and fleeting detail of the world into a life-long possession. Often as the high moment passes we are unaware that the particular cadence, the unique fall of light, is making a special mark upon our mind and feeling, leaving that signature not to be erased by all the floods and torrents of subsequent experience. Sometimes, however, when there is just such propitious coin-



Photographs by the Museum of Natural History, New York City



Photograph by Alinari



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PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL STRAND



cidence of moment and mood as will serve to render the imprint indelible, the encounter is heralded as it were with a jubilation of banners, with a blare of trumpets.

For all of us there are stored away some such unforgettable moments. We may remember the thick darkness of some particular night whose air was drenched with the intense perfume of the lime trees; the strange breathlessness of some unusual noon-day, languorous, somnolent, when the simmering light seemed almost to become audible. There may be memories of the sublime effect of great heat or great cold, of great tumult or great stillness: the terrifying clamour of a lighthouse in storm, the darkness and silence of an abandoned village. Many elements thus live on in our memory permanently fused with what were originally their accidental accompaniments. Honeysuckle may be for us forever enshrined in the scent of wild roses, and framed in the blueness of an Italian sky. The bitter tang of wet marsh land may have become inextricably blended with images of the opulent pink of rose mallows and the plaintive refrain of the meadow lark.

Very few sensations of course ever come separately and simply, wholly out of relation to their context. Oftener than not they are hopelessly tangled up with one another; attributes of sound and shape, of fragrance and temperature, with pressure and flavour, with tint and texture. Many flower perfumes—of violets, lilac, roses, geranium, valley-lilies—have so long and repeatedly been sensed in combination with their form and colour that the odour itself appears to have taken on the essential character of its source. Images of coolness,

of silkiness, of delicate pressure, of shadowy paleness, of luminous iridescence, attach themselves intimately to the remembrance of the odorous quality itself. Verbena is essentially a deep green fragrance, as is also mint. Heliotrope is a misty violet, and nasturtium amber and gold. The scent of freesias carries with it awareness of finely chiselled ivory bells. All the lily odours—of water lilies in particular—are burdened with the brooding quality of large petals too heavy for their whiteness, too sweet for their pallor, and tainted with the faint morbidity of something secret and oppressive. Pine—alike its taste and its scent—is dark and strong, with the strength of things bitter and earthy. New-mown grass and clover carry the bright wholesomeness of warmth and sunshine.

While all tastes and odours, like music, are originally inward-turning and spaceless, they may thus become encrusted with attendant images that render them almost solid and corporeal. Indeed many of our preferences, supposedly of taste and smell, are often actually determined by their unvarying association with a texture, a shape, or a colour. And correspondingly numerous likes and dislikes which seem to be based on the visual appearance of an object may really be grounded in some other quite different soil. There is little question that the low value set upon the dandelion, that flower of entrancing golden gladness, is due in part to its commonness, in part to its odour—disliked, somewhat strangely, by many—in part to the fact that it can never be

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gathered without withering, and in part to the unpleasant sensation of the touch of its stems when broken.

Seldom, then, do we experience isolated attributes revealed through a single sense. Yet nearly all are for the most part independently variable and capable of a wide range of configurations. It is out of their permutations and combinations that the rich world of immediate perception is built up. But not for the analyzing intellect only, sometimes also for living sensation, qualities may emerge as it were out of a void, clear and simple in their separateness. Thus sounds may come, flooding our entire consciousness and leaving no room for other awareness; and lights and colours, flavours and contacts as well. Sometimes the entire world may be reduced to a solitary sense of a perfume, a texture, a pervasive warmth, intoxicating freshness, or white chilliness.

Among the raw materials of the world capable of almost infinite diversity is colour. And yet for only a small number of the distinguishable differences of brightness and tone are there any denominations. Very many of such names as we employ are those of familiar objects to which the colour belongs—names of flowers and fruits and berries, of birds and fishes, metals and precious stones. There are the colours indicated by such words as copper, jade, salmon, canary, olive, amethyst, opal, dove, fawn; lilac, crocus, emerald, wisteria; plum, pewter, gold and periwinkle. But quite nameless are most of the gradations of which the colours of the spectrum and their blends are capable. A myriad of greens there are,

manifested in changes of the seasons, changes of night and day. How multitudinous the greens of springtime—the yellow-green of young leaves and grasses, of exuberant growths in damp places, the green of moss, and that in which the willow is veiled. Very different are the greens of winter: the blue-green of spruce and pine, of ice and of the cold spaces of the northern sky.

Red also has uncountable modulations. Paled, it gives us all the modes of pink—of sea-shells and magnolias and anemones, of arbutus and cherry blossoms and clouds at dawn. Darkened, it grows to crimson and maroon, and verges upon magenta and the hierarchy of the purples. In between are the fierce reds and scarlets, neither delicate nor yet sombre; the red of bitter-sweet and poppies, of the scarlet tanager and the wing of the blackbird, and of fire and blood and winter sunsets.

Even black and grey and white may assume an array of appearances. There is white opaque or translucent, white that is milky or pearly, faintly green or faintly blue; the dissimilar whites of the oyster, of ivory, of pearl, and of snow. And black may be dull or glittering, flat or with depth upon depth of profundity. The black of wet pavements, of wet tree-trunks, is very unlike the black of the thunder cloud.

The sounds with which the natural world is replete are too many and varied to be designated: reverberations and echoes, rumblings, murmurings, ripplings, light tappings, splashings, moanings, whistlings, sharp tearings, hummings; all the sounds of wind and water, the buzz of insects, the tumults

of the elements. Some are somnolent, hypnotic, some charged with premonitions of alarm, or vast and resonant, thin and sweet, sharp and concentrated. The wind itself has many voices. Its agitation of the sensitive leaves of the poplar before a storm is utterly unlike its sweeping across a field of corn or through high grasses in a meadow; unlike again its clatter in the sheets against a mast, or in the hollow beat of a sail.

Nature yields also many natural flavours for which description is found to be quite impossible; but any one adventurous in the domain of taste may derive from them a wide range of simple pleasures. The tender succulence of various grasses is of far greater individuality than would be supposed; and the stems of nasturtiums, the leaves of sorrel, many flower petals, besides winter-green and water-cress and pine needles, own each a special quality.

But only a few of the sensations yielded to the palate are thus derivable from substances to be found in nature in its wildness. Artificial blendings of natural elements may produce sometimes even greater pleasures. Eating and drinking may indeed attain to heights of truly exquisite experience. Any elements which could contribute, however remotely, to one's notion of nectar and ambrosia—honey-coloured, fruity, mysteriously perfumed—would mediate imaginative delight. All the more delicate, less nourishing of the foods devised by man, and all the finer products of the grape and of fermented fruits and grains, could be counted perhaps in this class. Here too belong that incomparable wafer, the Chinese rice-

cake, and the various concoctions of the Armenians and Turks, halwa, lokoom, paklawas,—intensely sweet, dripping with honey, or of flaky, strange consistency. Candied fruits, French *marrons*, *crème d'Isigny*, caviar and the cheeses, all contribute qualities of importance in the total life of the senses.

Various passages in literature containing glorifications of one or another of human viands bear witness to these potential imaginative values. The hackneyed instance of the Saint Agnes Eve ode is only one among many. Katherine Mansfield might be said to have immortalized the fruit cake, as did Brillat-Savarin his own invention, the soufflé. Many even quite substantial and intrinsically unimaginative articles of diet—roasts and soups and puddings—may derive a significance from legendary or authentically historical connections: the piquancy of biographical associations, the glamour of figuring in famous feasts, the ritualistic significance of national usages or taboos.

Many qualities other than the gustatory may be similarly enhanced by reason of their larger, richer context. For their intensest enjoyment certain sensations should be deliberately timed, and their setting scrupulously chosen. There are hours of the day and seasons of the year that seem by nature consecrated to special things. It is with a kind of impiety that one consumes raspberries anywhere except sequestered among their bushes and under the blazing sun of a summer morning that makes them soft and warm and very sweet. Flowers there are that inevitably call up those months of which they

are most characteristic. Lilacs and daisies, roses and buttercups, belong to June, corn-flowers and poppies to July. Crocuses are for March, hepaticas and violets for April. Purple cosmos is eloquent of October, and chrysanthemums of November. If we would keep, unspoiled and fresh, certain ritualistic associations dating from earliest childhood, we should never except in December permit ourselves a touch of the hard prickly leaves of the holly, or the aroma of spruce, the taste of *lebkuchen*, the clean but mysterious odour of newly extinguished wax candles.

The experiencing of many other things should be indulged at auspicious moments, not merely for the sake of associations thus preserved but for the attainment of a maximum sensuous effect. The moon ought never to be looked upon when the sky is altogether empty of clouds. Certain glades in the forest should be visited only when the light is slanting—in early morning or late afternoon. Some trees are to be rightly seen during special periods only. Almost the only justification of the maple and the sweet gum is their autumn dress; almost the only excuse for the apple tree is its spring radiance or its winter austerity. Cypressess, poplars, cedars and pines ought to be viewed in silhouette against the sky; and the oak when its magnificent skeleton is bare.

But not even at selected moments is all the world imbued with magic even for those imaginatively gifted. Expressiveness it may possess under many of its aspects of grimness, but incurably sordid and sodden, stale, and unprofitable it must appear also in countless situations. Some of this drabness

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operates for the further enhancement of what is experienced as lovely; and the artist may exploit the harsh contrast as did Masfield in *Cargoes*:

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white wine.

.
Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack,
Butting through the Channel in the mad March days,
With a cargo of Tyne coal,
Road-rails, pig-lead,
Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

Taken in isolation and for what they are in themselves, many unbeautiful things are perhaps at best devoid of significance, at worst painful or depressing. The natural world, unassisted by the blundering efforts of man, contains many of them: the magentas and mustard colours, the dull and dirty browns and reds; the evil odours of civet and musk and all putrefaction. It contains things lumpy and shapeless, like the heads of the hydrangea, and all thick stunted growths, and animals such as the toad and the rhinoceros; and insects with their stings. Even the sight of humanity itself at its worst adds to one's disenchantment: men and women in crowds, perspiring and dusty, with raucous laugh and bloated, sodden faces. It is indeed only because we are so inured to the appearance of our own kind that it does not more frequently impress us as either ludicrous or loathsome, as a thing like ". . . a

forked Radish with a head fantastically carved," fit, as Stevenson has it, to make little children scream. Of this manner of seeing is Carlyle's shuddering description of infancy:

. . . when thou thyself, a watery, pulpy, slobbery freshman and newcomer in this Planet, sattest muling and puking in thy nurse's arms; sucking thy coral, and looking forth into the world in the blankest manner, what hadst thou been without thy blankets and bibs, and other nameless hulls? A terror to thyself and mankind!

Like vegetables truly may humanity oftentimes affect us, creatures unwholesomely pallid as if from growing in damp darkness, or withered and scorched by the sun; creatures swollen with gluttony, or emaciated by fasting, and making their way over the ground for the most part with halting or unsightly gait, uttering queer chatter devoid of either sense or necessity.

Of the unlovely products of man's greed and laziness and vanity, of his stupidities and lack of taste, there are also plentiful instances to be found disfiguring the world. Man is the cause of bill-boards and ash-heaps, of garbage and black soot and the din of steel-riveting. He makes himself unutterably ugly shelters with porticoes and filigree decorations, and fills them with outrageous and meaningless knick-knacks. During his long occupancy of the globe he has contrived for his body many ridiculous coverings: feather belts and clumsy armour; frills and ruffles and high collars; thick paddings, unwieldy head-gear and ugly shoes—an array of monstrosities that culminates in modern days in trousers and straw hats. Without him there could never have occurred on

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earth such things as slaughter-houses and the stench of un-aired places, or dreadful pieces of greasy meat growing cold in their gravy on thick white china plates.

For effects of grandeur, of pathos, of irony, or for the evoking of beauties concealed under unpropitious exteriors, the artist may concern himself with all these human and sub-human things. Even, and perhaps somewhat strangely, in the interest of an exaggerated realism, he may use them, not for their powerful emotional effects, but simply for the sheer vileness and filth, the dreariness or unimportance which they possess. But we are not at the moment concerned with the vagaries of art in some of its recent manifestations—not even with its more usual traditions of beauty. In the last analysis, however, it is from the world he encounters that the artist draws the materials for his creative dreams. And that world, in turn, for the common man is immeasurably enhanced by reason of art. Things visible and audible, provocative in themselves of the intensest pleasure, gain a vastly increased enticement through the aromas that cling to them, the echoes that attend them, of the great poetry in which they have figured. The voices of skylark and nightingale could be never so provocative of rapture had they not elicited a like emotion in poets through all the ages. And the magical loveliness of birch and beech-tree, of springtime and even of the moon and stars, is likewise in some measure of this same derived kind.

But such enhancement of the elements of every-day experience we will not now take account of. What more prop-

erly we may in conclusion consider as constituting in some sense part of the objective order of the world are the names by which things are called. For these are far more than devices for pointing and classifying. Their use may render immeasurably more lovely whatever they are associated with. Sometimes it is the mere music of the syllables that enchants us—in names like *saffron* and *sable*, *ivory* and *amber* and *ebony*; names like *emerald* and *amethyst*, *daffodil* and *primrose*; and *beryl*, *opal*, *topaz*, *jasper*, *pearl*. Sometimes their natural melodiousness is reinforced by overtones gained through a deep funded wealth of vague associations in varied and gorgeous contexts—as the words *frankincense* and *myrrh*; the words *haven* and *harbour* and *pilgrim* and *shepherd*; *chalcedony* and *sardonyx*; *trieme*, *cargoes*, and *caravan*.

By repeated association with the things they stand for, names may come to seem part of the eternally necessary and natural qualities of nature. Sometimes so captivating is the object itself that it is its name which gains a factitious, a quite borrowed, value. In the case of things, and still more of persons, that we cherish, we are in no position at all to give an unbiased judgment as to the beauty of the names they bear. But sometimes on the other hand words are so heavily burdened with poetic association, with a flavour of mystery, that nothing discoverable on earth could possibly seem worthy of them. It is fortunate that, even if we would, we shall never find the things for which the names are *dragon*, *demon*, *minotaur*, *vampire*, *seraphim*. No flower, however miraculous,

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could be felt to be altogether worthy of the name *asphodel* or *lotus*; and probably not even the concentrated romance contained in all the ships in all the ports and seaways of the world would be quite enough to match the wonder of the word *argosy*. There are even places which, beautiful and strange as they might turn out to be, would disappoint a little as being not after all precisely the counterpart of the names by which we have called them: like Samarkand, and Arabia, Lesbos and Kashmir. No encounter in the jungle with its living beasts, however majestic, could contain quite all that belongs to the encounter with the words *tiger* and *lion*, *leopard* and *panther*.

For the most part, to possess a name for what we prize adds to our love and to the thing's apparent loveliness. Yet sometimes namelessness is but an added perfection. There are things rendered more glamorous because they are uncapturable even by a word; the

. . . buds and bells and stars without a name . . .
the

Sin without shape, and pleasure without speech.

No one needs, or wants, to designate the quality of sound made by the lonely bell-buoy on a wide waste of desolate sea; nor to identify by a word the strange music belonging to the accelerations and crescendoes, the retardations and diminuendoes of rising and falling tide. Nor do we crave a panoply of names corresponding to the kinds and degrees of blueness that belong to all the enchanted blue things of the

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world: blue, the incredible colour of corn-flower, larkspur and hyacinth; of the peacock's breast, and a turquoise scarab; of a robin's egg and the wings of butterflies; of chalcedony and sapphire; of steel; of shadows cast on snow; of still lakes at early morning; of smoke on a golden October day, and far-off mountains; of forget-me-nots and pansies and the eye of a child.

Most of all it is the ultimate elements of the world—earth and air, water and fire—that utterly suffice us apart from any enhancement through language. The primary substance of all things visible and tangible, they are in the simplicity of their varied modes and modulations a sufficient cause for our endless delight. They comprehend all the forms and qualities of earth; its rocks and its glittering sands, its marshes and meadows and firm soils. And all the aspects and configurations of air and water; as ice, and snow, as vapour, rain and fog; as winds from the four quarters of the sky; as frost and sleet, mist and hail; and the shapes that water takes upon the land—meadow-brooks and dark still pools in the mountains, little streams hurrying over stones and shallows, and deep silently flowing rivers; and bays and sounds and inlets; and the sea.

And fire: fire with its heat and its light, its myriad forms, and its uncounted meanings. We know its long yellow tongues, black-tipped, its blue flames, hot and consuming, its sullen red glow in the mouths of furnaces, its faint glimmer of dying embers. It vouchsafes itself to us as fierce lightning and as the flicker of fireflies, in candle flame and the lamps of light-

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houses and in great and terrible conflagrations. By its primal source in the sun our days are nourished, and by its shining in myriads of distant worlds our nights made lovely. Fire that has been for mankind in all the ages an object of worship and the medium of burnt sacrifices is still a thing above all others to behold with wonder and with rejoicing.

As a perennial source of exquisite sensation and emotion this world of ours with its waters and flame, its moon and stars and blossoms, its winds and perfumes, silences and sounds, is the possession, then, not of the artist only but of all people. What, however, we must now consider is no longer its provocation of mere passive delight but the contribution of its elements to those feelings and ideas which find expression through art.

CHAPTER IV

AESTHETIC SUBSTANCE

TO ASK, as we are now about to do, quite simply and confidently what the subject-matter of art may be, will to many appear absurd. Against all hope of finding to such a question any credible response whatsoever there are, we shall be gravely warned, too many sound and sensible reasons for despondency. For one thing, doubt will be urged as to whether it is possible so to divorce the substance of art from its structure as to investigate either in isolation. Would there be the same subject-matter or a very different if the theme of a novel were thrown into dramatic form, if a painted portrait were translated into sculptured low relief, or if the design of a small carving in ivory were transferred to a gigantic block of marble? Do not form and content vary together in intimate relation to one another? And can one speak of the *substance* of art at all, out of connection with the very particular rendering which it receives at the hands of its particular creator?

There is another, perhaps more serious, difficulty. Taking art in its broadest sense as including poetry and all other species of literature, music, architecture, and the dance,

sculpture, painting, and abstract design, how can one intelligibly raise any question whatsoever regarding *art* rather than *the arts*, severally and individually? May we with impunity thus overlook in these multiform inventions all their diversity of medium, of scope and of intention—all their variety even in the way of aesthetic limitation? Can there be expected to be forthcoming any all-embracing answer to so simple an inquiry as that regarding aesthetic substance *as such*? Moreover, if after all what is wanted to dispose of the problem is merely a list of all things that any imaginable picture or statue, poem or story, symphony or play or product of the builder's art, could be said to be occupied with, then a task of almost staggering dimensions would assuredly be ours. For with what, short of the entire contents of heaven and earth, does not art at one time or another concern itself?

These alleged obstacles to our present enterprise we shall later revert to, but at the moment, in the face of all reasons for hesitation, we herewith boldly address ourselves to the discovery of what may be said to constitute aesthetic substance.

As we look about us over the vast domain thus thrown open for inspection there at once suggests itself, as a possibly important scheme for its subdivision, the traditional distinction of representative and non-representative arts. This gives us grouped together sculpture, painting and various forms of literature, set in contrast with architecture, music and abstract design. For the use of this contrast of representative and non-representative character there is of course very ancient sanction. Plato based his exclusion from the ideal State of por-





traiture and of certain forms of poetry on the objection that these were imitative. And Plotinus after him observes:

The imitative arts—painting, sculpture, dancing, pantomimic gesturing—are, largely, earth-based; . . . they follow models found in sense, since they copy forms and movements and reproduce seen symmetries.

And with them he contrasts music and, with certain qualifications, the art of building.

But the interpretation of at least certain of the arts as non-imitative, and thus clearly marked off from the rest, is not consistently maintained, even from the beginning. All down through centuries of theorizing, both music and architecture have repeatedly been treated as partly imitative of certain elements in the natural world. Moreover, the analysis in terms of imitation of the two arts most plausibly regarded as involving reproduction, painting and sculpture, has by no means gone unchallenged. The protest against a simple theory of imitation, early expressed and repeatedly urged, reaches its climax in the aesthetic criticism of such recent writers as Clive Bell, who goes so far as to declare:

The representative element in a work of art may or may not be harmful; always it is irrelevant.

If then sometimes to all of the arts, at others to none of them, is granted a representative character, perhaps the concept of imitation would better be discarded altogether in the search for a fundamental demarcation within the field of the arts.

But there is another possible line of division which might

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appear more feasible: the distinction, namely, between the spatial and the temporal. On such a basis painting, sculpture, and architecture would be set over against literature and music; and in many respects this is a satisfactory dichotomy. But architecture, with its indifference to natural forms, is not quite satisfactorily to be affiliated with painting and sculpture, whose concern surely is with the things and events of the visible world; while drama, which portrays the deeds and character of man, is somewhat improperly joined with music, which seems oblivious alike of nature and of human action and destiny. In view of this confusion, it might seem perhaps that the contrast between the spatial and the temporal had better be avoided. Perhaps indeed for the determination of the subject-matter of the arts no preliminary assortment of them at all is necessary. But even in that case we cannot at once abandon as irrelevant to our problem this antithesis now before us of the spatial and the temporal. There is in fact a more immediate and important use to which it may be put than that of serving as a principle of classification, no matter how basic.

All the forms of art are *in* space or *in* time. They need either space or time as their medium, as the condition for their structure. But those arts counted as temporal, inasmuch as they involve time in the exhibiting of what they contain, also actually *present* time as part of that very content. And similarly the spatial arts, whose parts are literally *extended* in space, have also the function of mediating a direct apprehension of space either filled or empty. In short a very im-

portant part of that substance or content of art that we are in search of would seem to be nothing other than space and time themselves—the two primordial and omnipresent conditions for all human experience.

Man is himself a spatial creature with an inner aspect that is of the nature of a stream that flows; and he lives a life whose fabric is the interwoven warp and woof of pure spatial and temporal attributes. All his activities and preoccupations possess this double character. He deals incessantly with things in space that move and change as they endure through time. Even in his encounter with ideas, themselves in no literal sense subject to qualifications of size and shape and temporal change, his imagery is derived from the extended and the changeful. Not merely are all objects of man's attention thus invested with spatiality and saturated with time's everlasting transitiveness, but space and time themselves are in manifold ways the explicit concern of his speculation and emotion. Space he comprehends as an emptiness making possible all the observed movements of his own body. He knows it both as a complex of parts incredibly minute with the sub-microscopic dimensions of an atom and as an indivisible shoreless sea whose progeny is the uncounted multitude of moons and planets, meteors and suns. And time he meditates upon as a thing with the essentially human durations of a breath, of a step, of a heartbeat, or of its ampler divisions of hour and day, of year and lifetime. He contemplates it in its diverse appearances of brevities like those of electronic periods and of the terrifying immensities exhibited in a star's

cycle from its generation as a flaming nebula to its extinction as a gigantic cinder.

But of all that enters into man's pleasures and anxieties, into his labours and his dreams, there is nothing which for perfection of its spatiality and temporality can be named in the same breath with the things of art. Other shapes may partake of the quiescent nature of space, other sounds and movements may share in time's ceaseless fluidity. A work of art alone is the very epitome of space, exemplar of time—an unadulterated concentration of their pure essence. Repetition, which is the condition for all rhythm, requires either extension or duration; and whatever else art may be, its structure is a thing rhythmic. With this aspect of the functioning of space and time in art we shall later be specifically concerned. At the moment our problem is their importance, not for aesthetic form, but for aesthetic content or aesthetic substance. But this obviously commits us to the task of disentangling from one another the two interpenetrating manifestations in a work of art of formal and substantive spatiality and formal and substantive temporality. The difficulty commonly recognized of distinguishing structure from content in products of the creative imagination may, one would begin to suspect, be due in part to just this double functioning of space and of time within them.

Especially difficult should such a separating of form and content be in the case of those arts which *represent* nothing. The time that enters into the substance of music and the space that is part of the content of architecture might be expected

to prove unusually hard to distinguish from the mere formal temporality of the one and the mere formal spatiality of the other. But poetry in spite of its communicating of meanings partakes also of the quality of pure music; and sculpture in spite of its rendering of living shapes shares in the abstract character of architecture. In poetry, therefore, as in music, time as a condition for mere sequence would be not easy to separate from time revealed in its essence through all the devices of rhythm and cadence. Similarly in sculpture as in architecture the space involved within the boundaries of carved stone would tend to be identified with the pure space *as such* which through that carving is made manifest.

And it is of course precisely the *same* time or the *same* space that in each instance plays the double rôle. But whereas time and space in their character of mere sequentiality and extendedness are common to works of art and to all other objects whatsoever that happen to involve processes of change or relations of side-by-sideness, time and space as objects directly revealed to the imagination are the peculiar attributes of the artistic invention. Through music and through all expression into which music enters we seem to be ushered into the immediate presence not merely of things unqualifiedly temporal but of temporality itself. For the sensory burden with which the selected period is loaded is made to exhibit accelerations and retardations, waxings and wanings, palpitations and furious onrushings, diminuendoes and crescendoes in multitudinous variety and gorgeous profusion. But these effects are all referred back to the temporal stream

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within which they are displayed. Impalpable, unseizable, as that stream essentially is, such is the artist's command of what is borne upon its current that he can seem to lay hold upon time itself, to arrest and control its movement, to manipulate and mould its mysterious fluidity. It ceases thus to be experienced as a mere non-sensuous universal river sweeping onward all that moves and endures, but is rendered itself audible, itself almost corporeal, with strains and tensions, shudderings and relaxations. The throb of its past pulses fades gradually away into remote echoes, the tread of its approaching moments reverberates in our ears as deepening thunder.

In the lapse from the fleetness of dactyls or anapaests or iambs into the solemnized pace of the spondee we seem to experience the retardation not merely of things temporal but of time itself. This is what happens when

Now all strange hours and all strange loves are over,
Dreams and desires and sombre songs and sweet,

passes into

The savour and shade of old-world pine-forests
Where the wet hill-winds weep,

and what happens also in the miraculous slowing down at the end of

And there she lullèd me asleep,
And there I dream'd—Ah! woe betide!
The latest dream I ever dream'd
On the *cold hill's side.*

In the stupendous diminishing of the tempo at the end of the opening movement of Brahms' First Symphony it is as if moons and meteors and suns were checked in their courses: as if the very wheel of time in accordance with whose revolutions all things cosmic move were itself retarded. And always when the torrential currents of music are plunged into abrupt silence there is produced the effect, not of suspension of sound merely, but of a halting of time's trampling march altogether.

In the arts spatially extended we are beset by a corresponding illusion. It is actually a very limited segment of space that is appropriated by the artist—a canyon-like cleavage between walls, a slim shaft-like cone soaring upward, a spreading but low-domed volume. But it is carved out, as it were, from the vastness of space unlimited, and it appears to hold within its narrow confines a kind of sublimation of space in its essence. Even a small part of the space actually involved may thus suggest a plane or a void of extravagant dimensions and intensified spatiality. The dim halo, like a misty full moon, which in many Chinese pictures is the background for a seated figure, seems to epitomize lunar or solar magnitude—to be a microcosmic version of no less than macrocosmic immensities. And the level after level of receding planes revealed in the limited compass of a Dutch interior by means of a succession of rooms may promote an even fuller awareness of spatial amplitude than can the profound depth of an Umbrian landscape.¹

¹ See illustration 8.

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As in the case of time revealed through music the space imaginatively rendered by means of architecture may acquire the qualities of the things which are encompassed by it, or by which it is itself encompassed. It may appear to exhibit postures and movements—to spread, descend, brood, droop, converge, and soar.

There is still a third way in which time and space may enter into art. Besides supplying the basis for formal structure, and besides being themselves part of what is immediately presented as content, they may, through the medium of literature, be indirectly rendered by means of metaphor, or as the subject of description or narration. Their entrance thus may be only momentary—an epithet, a poetic figure making sensuously vivid the idea of the swiftness of time, of the wideness of space, of the inscrutable ways of the one, of the fathomless wastes of the other. Space the poet may call

The dark unbottomed infinite Abyss
and make it yet more vaguely portentous when he declares

Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss.

In Meredith's sonnet beginning

On a starr'd night Prince Lucifer uprose
the concept attains yet grander proportions:

And now upon his western wing he lean'd,
Now his huge bulk o'er Afric's sands careen'd,
Now the black planet shadow'd Arctic snows.

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. . . and at the stars,
Which are the brain of heaven, he look'd, and sank.
Around the ancient track march'd, rank on rank,
The army of unalterable law.

And time may be similarly translated into manifold sensuous terms, its moods, its variable paces, all its earthly subdivisions—hours and moments, recurrent seasons and circling years—made into things visible or audible. Its slow movement is made sensuously perceptible in

And time, and time, be honey-slow.

Its cosmic amplitude is suggested in

From the fix't lull of Heaven, she saw
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds.

In all forms of literature the myriad special qualities of particular moments of morning and of evening, of noon and of night, have over and over again been greeted and named. Time's passage in brief or extended periods has been communicated moreover by the varied devices at the command of the writer of the short story, of the play, of the novel. Ambrose Bierce, in *An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, reveals the incredible potential voluminousness for human thought of even a single instant; D. H. Lawrence, in *The Rainbow*, displays the ironic repetitiousness of time's content in the recurrent tragi-comedies of the passing generations. And in countless other tales it is time's emptiness of any significant filling, or its rich cumulativeness, that is the

theme. One at least of the important effects of Knut Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil* is that of the steady progress of time heaping up and bearing along, like wreckage upon the bosom of a torrent, all that is cast in its path.

Both space and time, then, we find entering into the substance of the arts in these various ways as elements rich and significant beyond compare. But more than this, we find that they appear not as contingent or partial or limited things, albeit it is never anything more than some restricted and special period of time, some very circumscribed portion of space, that is actually in any work of art the focus of our attention. What nevertheless by some miracle of the imagination the artist contrives to make us experience is nothing less than space and time in their essentiality. It is as if the whole of the fathomless past and trackless future converged upon the little stretch of duration seized upon and exploited in his art—as if there were concentrated within it the unearthly calm of time's infinitude and the breathlessness of its everlasting flow.

Similarly the space caught beneath a lowering archway, or vaulted high into a lofty roof, the space pervaded with intermittent light and darkness as in a Rembrandt canvas, or filled almost solid as in a block of carved stone, is as it were the precipitate of space quintessential and universal—the perfection of height and breadth and depth themselves.

But this is the inescapable and perplexing paradox of every form of art: that, being of all things in the world most individual and particularized—the expression of a vision

most sharp and bright and momentary—it yet is the revelation of what transcends all particularity or contingency or vicissitude. Of all marks of great art it is perhaps the most distinctive, this power of eliciting from the sensuous a clue to the super-sensible, from the particular the assurance of the universal, from the adventitious and ephemeral communion with the eternal and necessary. Thrown into sudden relief by the artist, the face or scene, the sound or shape, is made to proclaim, not its own mere vivid and transitory existence, but the generic meaning, the changeless essence of which it is itself but an accidental example. Richer, more laden with imperishable import than any single manifestation of it could ever be, that unearthly essence revealed to the imagination in the earthly mantle of an existent particular vouchsafes even in that guise its vast wealth of significance. Despite, or perhaps mysteriously just because of, its utter idiosyncrasy and concreteness, the chosen vehicle for the revelation is adequate for its task. Despite, or by very virtue of the particularity of the specimen, there appears to be concentrated within it the essential content of the whole immense array of all other possible materializations of its meaning, everywhere and always. All the wealth of attributes and of values belonging to the members of that vast potential assemblage, it contrives to appropriate, to assimilate, to illuminate and to shadow forth.

This convergence of multiform implications upon a narrow and highly localized item of experience is not of course altogether peculiar to the content of art. In the employment of

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words or of any other symbols as sensory precipitates of experienced meanings, we find ourselves distinguishing in them more than would seem possible if they were mediators of merely single objects or isolated happenings. Indeed with all perceptual moulds the same is true. Even for ordinary awareness things, persons, and events are sensed as transcripts from a realm of meanings richer and more resonant than their momentary counterparts. But it is the artist who most successfully elicits from the things of sense their quality of intimate resemblance to their pure originals. And this ascent achieved by him into the domain of eternal meaning occurs in a manner different from that of abstract conceiving. His imagination, with its appetite for sensuous concreteness, endeavours in fact to undo the work of intellection. In place of frozen concepts it discovers warm images; in preference to the austerities and delays of reason and proof it chooses the swifter human way of intuitive feelings; and scorning the merely edifying, or useful, or true, it intercepts pure particular qualities cast up from the flowing stream of experience to cherish them even for their own sakes.

But in so doing the artist's imagination need not in all respects manifest hostility to the intellect with its stultifying devices. For it is after all only reason at its most arid and impoverished that deems itself beyond need for refreshment from the well-springs of intuition and fancy. And the sensuous images, achieved by the imagination when it turns from the cold regions of abstract ideas and seeks out the primordial stuff of sensation, may be worthy of the highest veneration

even of the philosopher. At their most splendid these images are nothing less than the cold pure forms that minister to the mind in its highest moments of disinterested contemplation—forms into which life has been breathed, however, and to which has again been imparted all the rich flavour and iridescence belonging to their sensuous manifestations. These images—the shapes and sounds devised by the artist—thus differ from the anaemic and schematized product of abstract conceiving no less than from the wavering and blurred percepts of ordinary experience. They are distinct, stable, highly individualized, quiveringly alive, yet possessed of incalculable fulness of meaning due to their high pedigree from the Platonic universals of mystic imagining. Richer instead of poorer than any occurrence in the existent world, they contrive to reveal multiplicity in their singleness, universality in their particularized isolation.

Of such aesthetic subject-matter, exhibiting the mysterious intrusion of ultimate essence within the narrow confines of the momentarily existent, we have thus far taken account of only two varieties. Besides space and time there must be many others. Taking our cue from the discovery that notions so metaphysical as the universals of spatiality and temporality constitute for the arts a content of primary importance, we may be led to anticipate that others of the vast categories and basic elements of reality may play a similar rôle. Motion, light, sound, substance, change—perhaps even also their cor-relatives, that group of corresponding negations consisting of motionlessness, darkness, silence, insubstantiality and

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changelessness—would, one might suppose, be numbered among the ideas with which the artist could well be occupied.

And first as to motion—a thing itself conditioned by space and time, itself the progeny of their union. Precisely because it possesses this double heritage of spatial and temporal quality it should exert upon the emotions an even more powerful appeal than do space and time themselves. The first question, then, regarding it is its significance as an item of experience even outside the domain of the arts; and after that of the range and meaning of its functioning within them.

Now the kinds and degrees of motion occurring in the natural world are legion; and though they are seldom attended to with fullest intensity of awareness there is no question that, in the experience of the movement of beautiful moving things, we sometimes achieve sufficient absorption to become indifferent as to what it is that moves. At such moments we may even isolate from the total complex of attendant qualities the simple and single attribute of motility. From moving animals and people, moving clouds and cloud shadows; and mist and waters, leaves and grasses, and all else that is possessed of power, through time, to undergo a change of place, we may thus succeed in skimming off, as it were, and holding before our dazzled sight this most baffling and elusive of visible aspects. In such wise we may contemplate the myriad kinds of motion—motion uniform, accelerated, or retarded, motion intermittent or continuous, motion of plunging or of soaring, slow to the vanishing point of complete stillness, or fast to the vanishing point of invisibility.

In objects tangible and intangible, living and lifeless, this attribute may so absorb the attention as to summon up undreamed of likenesses and differences. The smooth sinuous movement of a brown river such as flows through the whiteness of Pisa may suddenly reveal itself as indistinguishable from the mysterious translation over the earth of a gigantic serpent; the dipping of sails in a gusty wind may be all at once identified with the wavering motion of butterflies' wings and the flutter of flower petals. Also a thing itself invisible like the wind may be made manifest in the visible movement of reeds, the visible quiver of poplar leaves. Movement of every conceivable emotional import—languorous, somnolent, hesitant, tumultuous, feverish, breathless—is constantly to be discovered. There is the abandoned wheeling of swallows, and the headlong coursing of low clouds in a storm; the undeviating flight of bees; the unresting advance and recoil of the sea upon the land; and the dreamy, scarcely perceptible drift of clouds far aloft in the slow lapsing of the upper air.

But even though multiform motions may be thus disclosed in their perfection and purity, they are after all for none of us motions altogether unadulterated by accompanying attributes of their particular context. Something of the distinctiveness of the object to which the motion belongs is most often transferred to the motion itself. Whatever the similarity between the swayings of the impalpable folds of light in the aurora borealis and of curtains of mist hanging low over marshland, the cosmic quality of the aurora's unearthly radiance precludes a comparison between its mobility and that

of any brooding earthly vapour. And however astonishingly akin are the silent gliding of a great Zeppelin and the ineffable swimming of fish, the sense of skyey enigma in the one sets it apart utterly from the other in its watery mystery. And all the motions of smoke, its powerful surgings, its drifting and floating, its streaming and swirling, bear the imprint of a thing possessing form though utterly unsubstantial, devoid of body, yet replete with colour and strange odours.

Of uncountable movements the world is full; and from them we may occasionally derive some realization of motion as such—a far-off intimation of its absolute nature. Turning now to art we want to see how important here is the rendering of motion, and whether, more perfectly than in life, its essence, like the essences of space and time, is conveyed by means of limited and particular instances.

Now the only forms of art involving both space and time, and therefore capable of exhibiting movement in the strict and literal sense of the term, are the dance and the acted play. But in the latter, movement is at best only incidental, and it would be far-fetched to regard as an explicit and important function of acting the revealing of the nature of motion for its own sake. The changing postures which the great actor is master of are displayed, not for the sake of the movements of the body, but for making visible the hidden states of the soul.

But the dance, which is sculpture made dynamic, sculpture permeated with colour and transmuted into music—an unqualified union of spatiality and temporality pure and simple





In The Metropolltan Museum, New York City

—is of all things in the world the most complete revelation of movement. It is movement communicated visibly, but reinforced by the appeal of accompanying audible rhythms and by bodily sensations of pervasive tensions and relaxations, incipient responses of rising and falling, swaying, drooping and soaring.

The dance is thus experienced through every avenue of possible stimulation as the very perfection of movement—movement universal and eternal, as if all exquisite moving things in the world—waterfalls and clouds and fire, streams and meteors, shadows, beating wings and fluttering petals—had yielded up the very principle of their motility to find it again incarnated in the moving arabesques, the ever-changing patterns of human figures. It gives us white limbs in motion—weaving arms, wavering hands, flying feet; and draperies in ceaseless fluidity, becoming insubstantial, becoming pennants of floating mist, iridescent films of rippling colour. A nodding feather, a slowly wafting fan, a swinging tassel, a filament of hair streaming on the air like flame—all contribute to the pageant of rhythmic change. Very surely the dance with its varied paces of grave march-time, of mad flight, of hesitant departure and quickened return, and all its moods of intoxication, of solemnity, of lyric ecstasy and savage exultation—very surely the dance is the unsurpassed translation into sensuous terms of the eternal meaning of movement: its epitomized, its glorified, essence.

The only means other than the dance yet discovered for the exploiting of movement for its own sake is the cinema.

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And with all its mistaken developments and misuses, the cinema is for this one purpose at least a truly marvellous medium. Here we may contemplate the beauty of motions far slower or far faster than are exemplified in actual moving things; but particularly the beauty of motions of exceeding slowness.

For, somewhat strangely, it is motion verging upon complete stillness that seems to hold the full perfection of its kind. And this we get when we watch the retarded progress of a sea gull floating downward so gently as to seem scarcely to move at all, or of a lark rising straight upward, poised on wings that appear momentarily to have ceased their beating altogether. This miracle of slow motion is what we may find also in very great retardations of human action and gesture: the deliberate curves and spirals of bodies diving, leaping, vaulting, running. Indeed any movement of any visible thing may acquire an almost incredible significance provided only it may be seen at the extreme possible limit of retardation. And then sometimes it may be experienced as the very quintessence of motion, neither of this thing nor of that, neither rapid nor slow, but motion quintessential. To the extent that the cinema can facilitate this kind of revelation it would seem to deserve ranking as at least a minor form of art.

From the static, purely spatial arts of architecture, sculpture, and painting we might expect to derive no deep experience of movement either represented or suggested. Their function would appear to be wholly that of revealing the very antithesis of movement, that of being the sensuous incarna-

tion of the concept of stillness. And there can be no disputing that at least part of their content is this embodied essence of the unmoving and changeless. But their inclusion likewise of a dynamic element has been also asserted. Rodin, for example, declared that both paintings and statues may represent forms apparently in motion provided their different parts are in positions which in life would occur not simultaneously but successively. These incompatible positions, attended to sequentially, will, he maintained, then seem to *occur* sequentially. As illustrations of the theory he cites Gericault's Horse-race and his own St. John the Baptist both of whose feet are planted flat on the ground, far apart—a position which they would assume only at successive moments. The statue does indeed suggest a figure powerfully striding. Hollingworth's theory of the resting-point offers another principle for the gaining of an illusion of movement. According to this the moment to be chosen by the artist is that of the very beginning or very end of any action. This also seems capable of verification. For it is certainly clear that the skilful technician is able to give an effect at once of equilibrium and of transitiveness quite different from the postures transfixed yet unstable caught by the camera.

But we need not therefore infer that it is essential or even desirable for the painter or the sculptor to devise means for transcribing, through his peculiarly non-temporal medium, effects intrinsically temporal. It may be that some semblance of activity will occasionally be achieved by devices like those cited, or by the more extreme means of representing the same

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members or features in several different positions simultaneously, as has been done by Marcel Duchamp, Jean Metzinger, and other moderns. But the representation of the motionless remains incontestably the more important enterprise of both painting and sculpture.

A dynamic quality of very different origin may however be granted to attach to these two spatial arts, as well as to architecture, pottery, and all forms of abstract design. This is a suggestion of movement, but movement somehow independent of time—a motor quality rather than any illusion of actual motion. For this effect is part of the intrinsic quality of lines themselves, or rather of responses in our bodies set up by those lines and thereupon read back into them. A curve, a diagonal, a spiral, though literally at rest, may yet in this sense be an incarnation of motion. The profile of a vase, the outline of an arch, of a tower, of a column, may thus communicate in a peculiarly intense way the attribute of motility. Abstract shapes, but also shapes that happen to be those of recognizable things, may do this. Vernon Lee has a passage describing the motor experience produced by the contemplation of the shape of a mountain.

The *rising* of the mountain is an idea started by the awareness of our own lifting or raising of our eyes, head or neck, and it is an idea containing the awareness of that lifting or raising. But it is far more than the idea merely of that lifting or raising which we are doing at this particular moment and in connexion with this particular mountain. That present and particular raising and lifting is merely the nucleus to which gravitates our remembrance of all similar acts of raising or

rising which we have ever accomplished, *raising* or *rising* not only of our eyes and head, but of every other part of our body, and of every part of every other body which we ever perceived to be rising. And not merely the thought of past *rising* but the thought also of future rising. All these risings, done by ourselves or watched in others, actually experienced or merely imagined, have long since united together in our mind, constituting a sort of composite photograph whence all differences are eliminated and wherein all similarities are fused and intensified; the general idea of *rising*, not "I rise, rose, will rise, it rises, has risen or will rise" but merely *rising* as such, *rising* as it is expressed not in any particular tense or person of the verb *to rise*, but in that verb's infinitive. It is this universally applicable notion of rising, which is started in our mind by the awareness of the particular present acts of raising or rising involved in our looking at that mountain, and it is this general idea of rising, *i.e.* of *upward movement*, which gets transferred to the mountain along with our own particular present activity of raising some part of us, and which thickens and enriches and marks that poor little thought of a definite raising with the interest, the emotional fullness gathered and stored up in its long manifold existence.

In some sense, then, although movement requires both space and time for its accomplishment, things merely spatial may mediate an experience of it. And correspondingly in things unspatial but profoundly temporal, like music, the secret of motion may also be concealed. For change of place, which is but one species of change, is yet so uniquely expressive of the ultimate essence of mutability that change of almost any other kind tends to become translated for our intuition into motor terms. Music, since it is preoccupied with

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temporality and variation as its raw material, so to speak, might then be expected to exhibit in a peculiarly perfect way the nature of pure motion.

And is this not precisely what above all else it yields us? The essential temporality of musical experience seems a revelation less of pure time than of time in its multiform manifestations through every conceivable variety of earthly changefulness. All that the musician has literally at his command is change of pitch, of pace, of volume; change of duration and tone quality, of key and discordancy and harmony—change thus in a sense totally abstract. But all change everywhere, of animate and inanimate forms in motion, of waxings and wanings, of brightness and size, of distinctness and colour, of shape and every other value, must after all in every case be manifestations of those same abstract qualities exemplified in pure music. Therefore it cannot but be changefulness in all the richness of its potential range of manifestations that this art suggests.

Once again we seem to find the old miracle of an extraction of infinitely complex content from a very limited particular. A sequence of chords, a fragment of melody, an ingenious variation upon some simple theme, is sufficient to open out a vista into the eternal change of all the world—of movement in its essence. All the fluent quality of water and wind; all the speed of storm-driven clouds and shooting stars; all the wild tumultuousness of cataracts and raging elements, and the sinuousness of the panther's tread; and the varied effects of waving banners, of swaying bodies, of tossing ships

and of the charge of wild horses, seem to find at last in music the incomparable universalized expression of their meaning.

Whereas the essence of motion or change thus figures to some degree in the content of both groups of arts—the purely spatial and the purely temporal—there are two other elements whose rendering is definitely limited to the arts of space. These are substance and light. Different in many respects as painting, sculpture, and architecture may be, they stand united over against all other types of artistic expression as revealers of these two things.

For ordinary experience there is in the world no *matter as such* endowed with merely abstract attributes of weight, resistance, cohesion, and extension. Matter as we encounter it is always matter exemplified in particular *things*; it is in each instance not only possessed of a special size, shape, texture, colour, temperature, and degree of rigidity, but it is also recognizable and nameable as an object. To no one, then, except to a philosopher with his peculiar power of abstract conceiving or to an artist with his gift of special vision, does it occur that beneath the disguise of the many particular unessential attributes with which all actual matter is encumbered there lurks the essence of materiality itself. But until this truth is realized it is impossible to derive from the three arts of the corporeal more than a part of what they have to offer. Of these, architecture is the most undistracted by rival appeals of other, more human, meanings, from its preoccupation with material substance for its own sake. It can give itself up to the task of revealing, through all the devices of

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the builder's art, the intrinsic nature of matter with its stresses and strains, its thrusts and balances, its heaviness and its eternal quest after equilibrium. Choosing only certain substances possessed of both weight and inflexibility, architecture procures for us an intense awareness of the necessary and omnipresent character of the corporeal as something ponderous, resistant, overpowering in its uncompromising materiality. Schopenhauer, in his unsurpassed analysis of the content of art, observed:

. . . properly speaking the conflict between gravity and rigidity is the sole aesthetic material of architecture; its problem is to make this conflict appear with perfect distinctness in a multitude of different ways.

But he later adds:

. . . besides this I am of opinion that it is the function of architecture to reveal the nature of light just as it reveals that of things so opposite to it as gravity and rigidity. For the light is intercepted, confined, and reflected by the great opaque, sharply outlined, and variously formed masses of stone, and thus it unfolds its nature and qualities in the purest and clearest way. . . .

It is indeed plain that, being unconcerned with scenes or events of the world of recognizable things, architecture is in a position to expatiate upon light no less than upon substance treated sheerly for its own sake. It is an art adapted, as is perhaps no other, to exhibit the miraculous subtleties of light in its multitudinous gradations. It can display the beauty of exceeding brightness as reflected from polished surfaces; but

also all the delicacy of faint shining when in the curving of planes and in the abrupt cleavage of carved stone the illuminated places are invaded by shadow.

In sculpture and painting, as in nature, light is given as it falls upon concrete particulars—as it is emitted from the surfaces of recognizable *things*, marking out their contours, delimiting them from their surroundings, or immersing them in radiance. And yet painting and sculpture also, even if with perhaps greater difficulty than architecture, have for part of their function the revealing of light for its own sake. And, like architecture, they contribute also to our experience of material substance.

Now, for the working of this effect two ways lie open to the artist. He may proceed as we have observed him doing in the pursuit of spatiality and temporality and mobility in their essence. He may seek out supremely individualized particulars and render them in all their uniqueness. Or he may do something very different. Instead of striving after the secret of light and of material substance by the mysterious device of giving their ephemeral and contingent exemplification in things, he may try to portray sheer matter, with intensified three-dimensionality, exaggerated corporeality—matter extended, coloured, solid, resistant, cohesive, heavy, but shaped to conform to the appearance of no recognizable object in the world. If he chooses the first way he will trace the forms of trees and mountains, of living beings and houses and fruits and flowers. If he chooses the second he will depict regular or irregular geometric solids—cones and cubes and spheres

and pyramids—thin slices of matter, or huge blocks, discs and rectangles and ovals, smooth shafts or jagged segments.

But whichever way he chooses he is bound to be largely misunderstood. If he paints or carves a lovely head or torso, this will be supposed by many to be quite simply because it is a head or torso, and lovely: if it is a withered body, a bare rock or tree-trunk, a broken jug or a cabbage that he chooses to lavish his skill upon, he will arouse wonder as to why he wantonly preferred a thing so ungraceful or unimportant. If on the other hand he takes the way of the cubist painter or sculptor he will incur criticism for making shapes which are the shapes of nothing. But the truth is that in all cases alike his primary concern is really not with *things* at all but with the material of which they are composed, and with the light and shadow reflected from their surfaces.

And we too may become relatively indifferent as to what in the way of a nameable object we are confronted with, finding that a pile of stones, a loaf of bread, a simple house, or the head or hand of a madonna are all alike instances of material substance, all alike occasions for a panegyric of colour. Many and diverse as are the appeals to our emotional understanding of Vermeer and Velasquez and Mantegna and Signorelli, of Michelangelo and Cézanne and Giorgione and Renoir; of Phidias and Brancusi and the ancient Egyptians, this at least we may derive from all of them: knowledge either of corporeality in its essence, or of light in its incredible beauty, or of both these things at once. And regardless of nationality, period, or tradition, the great masters of material

substance and of colour throughout the ages mediate this same experience. Although their primary appeal is to our sight, this appeal is incalculably enhanced by stimulation also of our tactile sense, and by pervasive strains and tensions induced throughout the body. For it is thus that we are vouchsafed the experience of weight and pressure, of resistant solidity and three-dimensional mass—in short of matter, whether it be that of living flesh, of inanimate substance, or of surfaces suggestive of no recognizable thing in the world.

Turning now to music and to poetry, the two arts of the immaterial and spaceless, we might expect to find, in them both, some generic content having the same significance that light and materiality possess for the arts of space. Of this kind of content would in fact appear to be sound, with its correlative silence—two elements that constitute for the stream of life a filling comparable to what matter is for space.

Now, as is the case with matter, sound occurs always in nature as belonging to something in particular—it is the roar of water or of thunder, the chirp of insects and the flutter of their wings, or voices animal or human in all the variety of their emotional expressiveness. And the silence of the natural world is experienced always as some special soundlessness, as the absence of some particular kind of sound. Such silence marks the ending or the anticipated beginning of some nameable murmur or tumult, or intervenes as the breathing spaces between the pulses of living speech. But sound occurring as pure tone in music, or as the mixed tone and tonelessness of vowels and consonants in the syllables of poetry, is sound

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shaped and accentuated by a silence as devoid of definite earthly connotations as itself. It is sound almost or entirely unsuggestive of the clamours and cries to be encountered in the world of things and is possessed only of volume and pitch, of duration and timbre. And the silences that encompass it are vibrant with anticipations of such sounds only, non-human and unearthly. And yet, however devoid of any taint of deliberate imitation of sounds recognizable and nameable music and poetry may be, there is in some sense gathered within their cadences the epitomized quality of all sound everywhere and always. For even the purest tones of woodwinds and brasses, of strings and drums and of the organ, partake of the generic qualities of sound as such, possessed by sounding things of every kind whatsoever. But something of the particular lamentation and jubilation of wind and sea and forest and of all the voices of sky and earth contribute also to their fulness, to the richness of their intent.

Space, time, motion, sound, matter and light—these, then, constitute a large part of the positive content of the arts. But there are the negations of these also by which they are enhanced, but which may be experienced besides as significant in their own right. Immateriality, silence, motionlessness, and darkness are all possessed of positive character. Indeed, immateriality and emptiness are perhaps no more properly to be called denials of material substance than is matter the negation of pure space. And the others, although parasitic in the sense that they are partly dependent for their content upon the things of which they are the deprivation, may pro-

duce in particular situations very individual effects. All motionlessness is not the same, nor all silence. There is the motionlessness of the thing that has moved but will never move again; and of the thing in which there is the present dim premonition of a stirring that will presently take place. There is the motionlessness of what has not, nor ever can have, moved, being of the nature of what is inert, devoid of the gift of motion. And as for silence, that which succeeds a sound that has ceased is very different from the silence laden with the omen of new sound coming to birth—very different again from the desolate silence that is unbroken by a hoped-for voice, or bell, or footstep. Then there is the darkness from which light has departed, a darkness unlike that heavy with the absence of an awaited light that does not shine. There is darkness that is full of terror, or of sadness, or of peace. Quite without the aid of the artist these negative conditions of the world may be found loaded with meaning, and provocative of emotions even more intense than those belonging to the affirmations of existence. Indeed the quality of the sublime probably derives from them more than from any more substantial elements. In the words of Burke:

All *general* privations are great, because they are all terrible; *Vacuity, Darkness, Solitude, and Silence.*

But it is in art that such negations acquire their greatest expressiveness, for they, like their opposites, may be given shape, modulation, accentuation—all the beauty to be gained from formal treatment. At the hands of the artist they may,

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no less than matter, motion, sound, and light, appear as the full embodiment of an eternal essence. In the changeless quiet of carved stone we may learn the very secret of all changelessness. In the shadows cast by columns, or pervading the deep recesses of a cathedral—far back along a triforium gallery or high within a dome—we may find the very perfection of darkness. And from the hush alternating with pulses of music we may seem to derive the meaning of essential silence wherever it may be found. Sometimes even it may seem as if in all the arts in which they are exemplified the effects of the motionless, the dark, and the soundless were given less for the sake of motion, light, and sound than for the fuller glorifying of their negations. As subject-matter of poetry the great imaginative significance of the negative aspects of the world is over and over brought home to us:

Darkness more clear than noon-day holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any sound,

writes the poet. And again and again silence is exalted and rendered imaginatively intense:

In low lands where the sun and moon are mute
And all the stars keep silence

· · · · ·
Drink the pale drug of silence

· · · · ·
Speak silence with thy glimmering eyes
And wash the dusk with silver

· · · · ·

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In lone and silent hours,
When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness.

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And silence, too enamoured of that voice,
Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

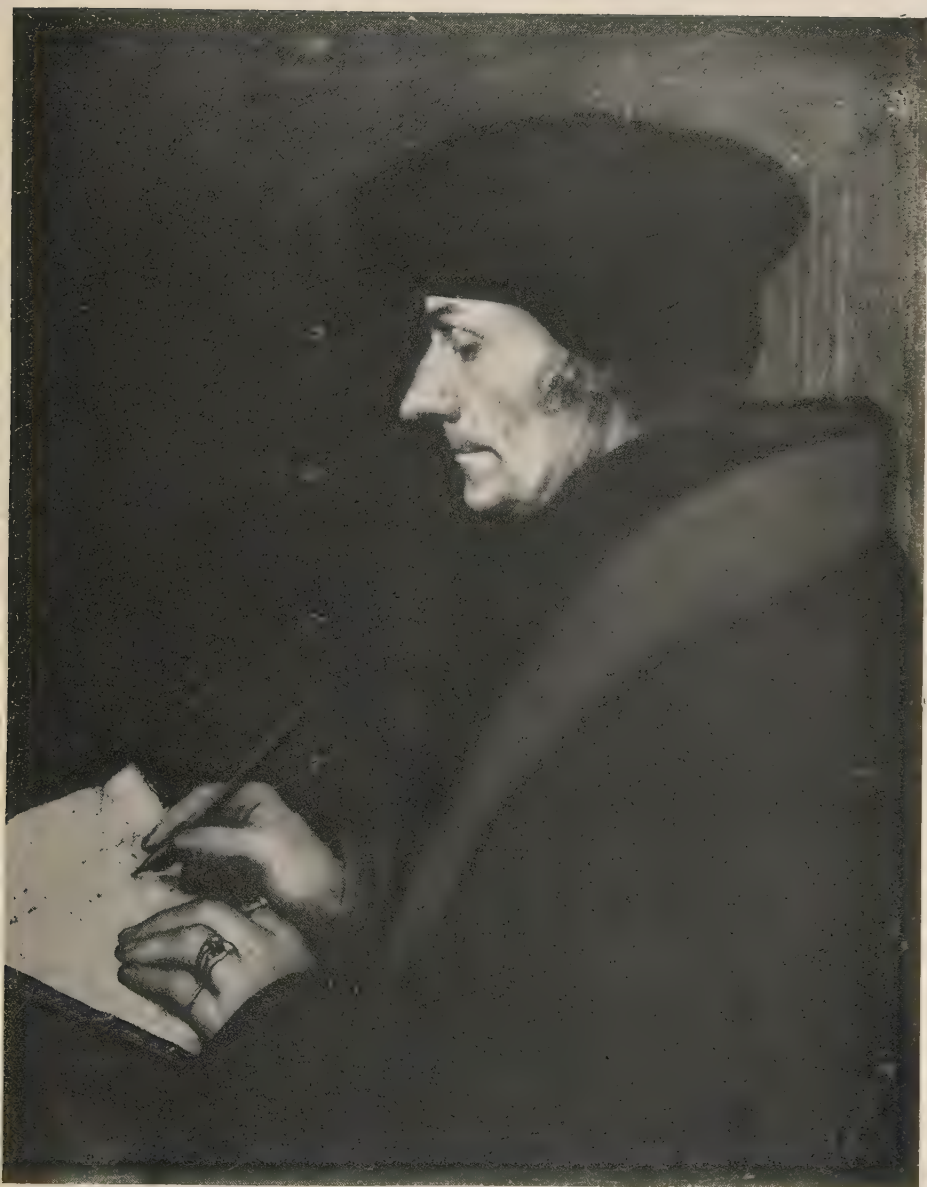
Now, fundamental as we have found all the generic essences, both positive and negative, to be, it is not true that they constitute the sole subject-matter of the arts. From the assertion that the primary concern of the painter is not with *things* but with matter and with light, it must not be inferred that he is unconcerned with *things* as well. If a tree or a mountain is to him fundamentally the revelation of the intrinsic qualities of matter, the tree will be also the manifestation of the essence of what is living and growing, and the mountain of the inert and lifeless. More than that, the tree that he paints will, if he be a great artist, seem the embodiment, not of what belongs to the general order of vegetable life only, but more specifically to the nature of trees as such. And even beyond that, of a special kind of tree and a particular instance of that kind, seen at a single moment, under a certain slant of light; and yet seen under the aspect of eternity.

For this in the last analysis is the secret of the artist's vision, as Santayana said it was of the philosopher's, and Plato of the lover's, and Plotinus of the mystic's in his flight to the One: that it envisages not particularity and existence even in the particular and existent, but always, even there,

the eternal. But perhaps no less mysterious than the artist's mediation, through the individual thing, of the type in all its infinite fulness, is his revelation of that thing's utterly unique essence—an aspect or quality, it may be, of a moment, and yet impervious to all earthly vicissitudes of time and change.

The old Tudor writer, John Selden, once declared: "Kings are all individuals, this or that King; there is no species of kings." And similarly it might be said that there is in the world not man but men, not life and death, but lives and deaths—not even individuals as such, at no particular moment of development and in the grip of no particular emotion. And yet a Tamburlaine, an Attila, an Arthur, a Richard the Third, a Priam, a Macbeth, or a Charlemagne is very surely an incarnation of the type, King, even while he is also on the one hand a very revealing instance of humanity as such, and on the other hand of a highly individualized personality.

And similarly the mothers and fathers of history, whose impressive or tragic lives have captured the imaginations of men, are particular individuals and also in their several ways epitomized versions of tender or of pitiless parenthood. This double meaning attaches to Cybele and Ceres and Eve, to Medea and Hecuba, Agamemnon and Abraham, to Herodias and Clytemnestra and the Madonna. Père Goriot and Cenci, Queen Gertrude and Hermione, Hagar and the father of the prodigal son—all possess this two-fold significance. It is their very special particularity that seems to make them





Photographs by Anderson





Photograph by the Hispanic Society, New York City

the revealers of the superindividual generic type. And the same is true of that motley company of the sons and daughters of the race whose filial rôle is their outstanding attribute: Electra and Ishmael and Aeneas, Hamlet and Oedipus, Cordelia and Hedwig and Orestes.

And all that makes up the content of universal human destiny as depicted by the great story-tellers of the world, though it is related as part of some particular life-history, is yet received as a vivid incarnation of recurrent generic events. So it is with the notable deaths recorded in literature, the deaths of Leander and Roland and Troilus; of Falstaff and Caesar; of Cyrano and Beauchamp; of Cleopatra, Osiris, Madame Bovary, and the Duchess of Malfi. Each life's end when imaginatively rendered is far more than a moving or pitiful or terrible rending of spirit from flesh; it is in a miraculous way the incarnation of the very meaning of death as it comes everywhere to all who are mortal.

And the faces of Holbein's Erasmus, of Piero's Duke and Duchess, of El Greco's Grandees—all the great portraits of all the schools are, once more, an expression of what is universal and eternal but garbed in the dress of the particular. It is an entire hierarchy of meanings that they consequently embody, meanings of all the successive degrees of specificity. They are an imaginative revelation of fleshly substance; of life as such; of humanity in its essence; of eternal manhood or of eternal womanhood. Beyond that, they reveal even a particular civilization, and a limited national phase of that civilization. And last of all they are a rendering of the enigma

of the individual, caught in a momentary mood and attitude, and eternalized.

Just as the antithetical effects of the general and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, are thus given always in art in intimate relation, reconciled and harmonized, so all the kinds of content that we have considered as the subject-matter of art are revealed invariably in the context of what is most dissimilar in its effect. Change is projected always upon a background of changelessness, corporeality intrudes into emptiness, light encroaches upon darkness, and sound upon silence. Each member of these various antitheses is enhanced by, and in turn enhances, its own opposite which now it supplants, and by which now in turn it is itself supplanted. It is for this reason that in its very content, and apart from the formal aspects of rhythm and symmetry, art is in a position to satisfy the various antithetical cravings of human consciousness; to satisfy by objectifying and reconciling them. Man's deep desire at once for rest and agitation, for stillness and tumult, for the substantial and the insubstantial, for darkness and light, finds its only perfect realization in the artist's simultaneous and harmonized use of all these qualities. Because it can thus magnify and perfectly reconcile them, art is able to fulfil the first part of its promise to resolve the essential emotional conflicts by which we all are overtaken.

And now as to the question, the answer to which we have thus far avoided, regarding the possibility of so divorcing content from structure in a work of art as to consider each

separately. To this it may be granted that in any absolute sense such separation is impossible. Very certainly modification of a rhythm will alter, not the abstract pattern of sounds only, but also to some degree their meaning. And the shifting of focus in a design or a changing of its symmetry will inevitably change likewise the ultimate significance of the whole.

One can scarcely hope, then, to dispose utterly of the problem of aesthetic content apart from that of structure. But even supposing that for certain purposes one may treat as separable the subject of an artistic invention and the sensuous form which that subject has acquired, may we assume its meaning to be a changeless, unambiguous thing, the same for all persons who may approach it? Is it not possible that even a single work of the imagination is as manifold as are the participators in its beauty—different for each? Perhaps after all the meaning is not really there, accessible, actual, a quality that endures while man sleeps, that awaits his waking upon the return of day. Perhaps it has its seat really not in the objective elements of art but only in the human spirit itself. It may be, that is, not a stable thing, the same for all men, but unique for each individual—for each unrepeatable moment even in the everlasting flux of each experience. Santayana has declared that beauty

cannot be preserved mummified in any external object; it can belong to things only by being attributed to them by some living soul . . . Not the marble which a man without any sense of beauty might see, is the seat of beauty . . . The only Venus which is inalienably beautiful is the divine

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essence revealed to the lover as he gazes, perhaps never to be revealed to another man, nor revealed to himself again.

But even if the ultimate flavour of beauty and meaning as momentarily apprehended exists nowhere but in the secret habitation of each separate inmost self—part of the streaming phantasmagoria of its emotions and its dreams—a large part of it must, because of our common human heritage, be shared by all of us who perceive its sensuous incarnation. For in the last analysis, despite our myriad diversities, it is largely the same fundamental endowment that belongs to each. We are creatures primarily similar in bodily constitution, in natural sensibilities, and in emotional weaknesses and strength. Regardless of race or sex it is much the same landmarks that we steer our course by: birth, youth, love, a little labour and enjoyment, a little triumph and disillusion, and then death. For such as we the ultimate implications of any work of art—lyric or portrait, epic or basilica, symphony or song—can be to a small degree only a private, unshareable possession.

CHAPTER V

AESTHETIC FORM

EVEN the most casual view of the human individual and of the art that he fashions must throw into relief a startling resemblance between them. Art could be called the image of man if for no other reason than that both alike are characterized by one attribute overshadowing every other. This attribute is rhythm. The human organism is built upon a design that is in all important respects symmetrical; and his vital reflexes, including breathing and heartbeat, are chains of regularly repeated movements. Even his acquired reactions, when skilful, are marked by rhythmic regularity. And in the functioning of his mind the pulses of attention, themselves rhythmic, tend to impose upon entirely unrhythmic events their own patterns of recurrent stress. Correspondingly in the spatial arts rhythm appears as simultaneous order in the guise of symmetry, and in the temporal arts as an order of sequence through the regular recurrence of an element. Equally in a building, a statue, and a painting, and in literature and music, rhythmic repetition like that exhibited

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in the living organism would seem to be the very basis of aesthetic structure.

But natural as such a situation must in certain respects seem, it should also appear somewhat surprising. For unvarying repetition, while it is the principle of order and conditions the experience of fulfilled expectation, promotes also the lapsing of consciousness altogether. In the human body regularity of rhythmic functioning favours speed and skill, but it also makes for oblivion. Assimilation and growth are conditioned by invariability of bodily rhythms, but the greater their regularity the more completely they drop below the threshold of attention. And while perfection of control in man's responses to his environment is attainable only if those responses become automatic and rhythmic, as objects of attention their importance decreases in exact proportion to their regularization.

But since the purpose of art is increase rather than decrease of consciousness, and since with infallible swiftness and sureness it accomplishes this end, one might suppose that its rhythms and symmetries would need to be, not regular and perfect like those of the living creature, but unceasingly qualified by the unsymmetrical and arrhythmic. In spatial art we should expect to find sufficient regularity to produce, through the effect of equilibrium, a sense of triumph over the force of gravity; and in the temporal arts sufficient regularity to allow for invariable arousal of expectation, invariably gratified. But neither in the one case nor in the other would we anticipate regularity so great as to bring

quiescence at the expense of the dynamic quality belonging to strain and tension; nor attainment of the expected to the total exclusion of novelty.

As the more plausible formula for aesthetic structure we might, then, postulate rhythmic repetition for its conditioning of order and for its profound hypnotic effect; but rhythmic repetition constantly interrupted by the arhythmic, and pervaded by just such quality of the unpredictable as would serve to prevent passage from consciousness into oblivion and at the same time induce the thrill of strangeness in the midst of quietude and security. And what we would need to do is verify such a formula through an examination of the structure of the several arts.

To this end let us begin with poetry. For it is perhaps in this art, in richer variety and greater abundance than in any other, that we find rhythm exemplified. We find it in the guise of alliteration, of assonance and rhyme, of metre, of stanzaic patterns, of recurrence of single words and of refrain. Our task, then, would be to discover just how constantly and how importantly in these various poetical devices sameness is sacrificed for variety, and the hypnotic effect of the purely rhythmic is neutralized by the intrusion of the restlessness and excitement belonging to the unordered and, therefore, unpredictable.

Consider in the first place rhyme, which, though frequently dispensed with, as in blank verse and the first and third lines of most ballads, produces the effect of incantation. But it is quickly seen that this incantation is constantly broken as with

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the call of strange voices. For throughout great poetry rhymes occur which do not exactly repeat the expected sound but deviate from it ever so slightly, like a fading echo. And these are incomparably richer than any so-called perfect rhymes in that they possess, in addition to the appeal of repetition, that of the utterly surprising. Take for example

And then Love said: "Lo! when the hand is hers,
Follies of love are love's true ministers"

and

Thy mastering music walks the sunlit sea:

This harp still makes my name its voluntary.

and

For the stars and winds are unto her
As raiment, as songs of the harp-player.

The conjoining in rhyme of the words *plant* and *want* with the added beauty of the coupling of *bliss* and *wilderness* occurs in Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*:

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

And it is Shelley again who pairs *ever* and *quiver*, *kiss* and *palaces*, *sky* and *fantasy*, *sphere* and *sepulchre*, *death* and *beneath*, *waste* and *overpast*, *wrong* and *tongue*, *returning* and *morning*.

When three or more lines are linked by end-rhymes there is opportunity for even more effective departures from the

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established pattern. *The Blessèd Damozel* exemplifies this. In it we find such triplets as *Heaven, even, seven; choristers, hers, years; on, begun, sun; calm, warm, arm; untrod, God, period; spheres, barriers, tears*. Such rhymes as these are frequently condoned as a regrettable but unavoidable consequence of the paucity of exact rhymes in our language. And some cases of imperfect rhyme do undeniably constitute defects which may or may not be forgiven. But to regard all deviations from precise rhyme as no more than inadvertent lapses from perfection would be to misjudge one of the subtlest devices for verbal music. Such deviations cannot be indulged in, of course, except sparingly. Like discord, their function is to enrich and impart an element of strangeness; and like discord they need a very secure background of established harmony from which to depart.

A less important kind of possible irregularity to be deliberately sought is the repetition of a sound not, as in the more usual sort of alliteration, in initial letters, but elsewhere in the words. Such lines as

And watered with the wasteful warmth of tears

or

I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore

or

Low over dim fields fresh with bloomy dew

contain all the opiate quality of an insistent recurrence. But the repetition is more exquisite when the repeated letter oc-

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curs now at the beginning, now at the end, again is buried deep within a word—as the sound of *m* in

With a clamor of waters and with might
or of *l* in

Alone and palely loitering
and in

. . . live alone in the bee-loud glade,
of *m* and *l* in

And hallows with strange tears and alien sighs
Thine unmelodious mouth and sunless eyes
and in

There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow;
or of *b* in

Of beechen green and shadows numberless,
and *m* and *s* and *l* in

The solemn slope of mighty limbs asleep.

But most important for its imparting of a flavour of faint surprise are the multitude of possible metrical irregularities. So important are these, indeed, for the attaining of flexibility and expressiveness that prosody might be regarded less as the study of norms of structure to be adhered to than as the study of ways to freedom from the coercion of established patterns of structure. Correspondingly the technical skill of a poet might be measured by the ingenuity of his invention of devices for breaking the regular beat of his rhythms.

Simply enumerated, the types of possible metric irregularity but feebly indicate their actual effectiveness. In practice they really resolve themselves into a momentary substitution of a metre other than the dominant one. "Inverted stress" is nothing but the replacing of an iamb by a trochee or of a trochee by an iamb; or of anapaests and dactyls by one another. This is exemplified in

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
 Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers

and in

. . . the high gods took in hand
 Fire, and the falling of tears,
 And a measure of sliding sand
 From under the feet of the years.

And, at least usually, "extra-metrical" syllables amount merely to the intrusion of an anapaest or dactyl into two-syllable verse:

So, one day more am I deified.
 Who knows but the world may end tonight?

On Lanier's view that what counts is constancy of the time consumed in the utterance of the words rather than constancy in the number of beats to the line, or even in the number of its syllables, metrical substitutions might seem to be robbed of their virtue of imparting irregularity. And it is indeed undeniable that when three syllables take the place of two they are speeded up so that their time is equal to that of the shorter foot. But in every case the feeling of the changed beat

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enters into our experience of the movement. For the plausible interpretation of English metre is that it involves both length and stress. Sometimes irregularity is, as it were, regularized as in Stevenson's *Romance*:

I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night

where two kinds of metre consistently alternate. But oftener the metric irregularity, particularly in a very short stanza, will be limited to a single departure from the standard beat. Sometimes, when this occurs in the concluding line, it will nevertheless impart to the entire group of lines its peculiar kind of magic. This may be by way of an inverted stress:

Oh, lay my ashes on the wind
That blows across the sea,
And I shall meet a fisherman
Out of Capri,¹

or of an extra-metrical syllable:

I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too;

or, perhaps most exquisite, the lapse into a rare spondee:

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

¹ From *The Harp Weaver and Other Poems*, published by Harper and Brothers, copyright 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

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Finally there is the magnificent array in English poetry of refrains, either as part of a line, as an entire line, or as a group of lines. These in a small proportion of cases occur without variation from stanza to stanza, but far oftener they exemplify the enormous effectiveness of intrusion of the new into the midst of the already familiar. But it is not merely that a delightful effect of novelty in a context of always increasing intimacy is thus achieved. The slight modification from recurrence to recurrence in the phrasing of a refrain may be the source of an even more important effect. It may be the means to the attainment of climax: a precipitation of the gradually hoarded meaning of the entire poem into some supreme expression which transfigures and yet epitomizes the whole. There are other ways by which such climactic consummation may be gained; but perhaps this way of increasingly intensified variation upon a repeated theme is the most propitious. There are two superb instances of emotional heightening due to skilful employment of this device that would alone be sufficient to prove its incomparable effectiveness. The old poem *How Can the Heart Forget Her?* has this as the first stanza:

At her fair hands how have I grace entreated
With prayers oft repeated!
Yet still my love is thwarted;
Heart, let her go, for she'll not be converted—
Say, shall she go?
O no, no, no, no, no!
She is most fair, though she be marble-hearted.

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The concluding lines of the following stanzas run thus:

Heart, let her go, for I can not endure it—
Say, shall she go?
O no, no, no, no, no!
She gave the wound, and she alone must cure it.

Heart, let her go, if they no grace can gain me—
Say, shall she go?
O no, no, no, no, no!
She made me hers, and hers she will retain me.

And in the final one:

Heart, let her go, O heart I pray thee, let her!
Say, shall she go?
O no, no, no, no, no!
Fix'd in the heart, how can the heart forget her?

There is a similar cumulative effect in Tennyson's *Mariana*. The first and second stanzas end respectively:

She only said, 'My life is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

And

She only said, 'The night is dreary,
He cometh not,' she said;
She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!'

These two forms, with only the slightest further variation, occur alternately as the close of the third, fourth, fifth, and

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sixth stanzas, piling up their increasing effect until the seventh, which ends:

‘Then,’ said she, ‘I am very dreary,
He will not come,’ she said;
She wept, ‘I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!’

Variation of length of lines, and complexities of arrangement of rhyme scheme, will be more appropriately illustrated later when we are concerned with the problem of the total pattern of poetry. But they may be mentioned in passing as contributing in still further ways to the neutralizing of a too perilously tranquillizing effect.

In the case of prose the problem of aesthetic form would seem to be concerned, not as in poetry with ways of varying a predominant regularity of movement and stress, but rather with the tempering of an essential freedom and variety with occasional uniformities. On the whole, avoidance of repetition of letter, of word, of phrase, of cadence, and of rhythmic pattern is the rule; but the artist in prose is he who, without destroying the desired variety and flexibility, yet manages by judicious use of every kind of repetition to impart a sense of music. Thus while his successive sentences are for the most part variable in length, in the position of the main pauses, and in pitch and stress, he will occasionally indulge in parallel structure, in clauses of identical form, in phrases of similar cadence. He may even, though sparingly, use alliteration and refrain. It will be most notably in oratory, where the primary purpose is persuasion, and in invocations, jubila-

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tions, and laments, that there will be considerable increase in these types of recurrence. As in

O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

Or as in:

O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised: thou hast drawn together all the far-fetched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words *Hic jacet*.

But sometimes less passionate subject-matter—a mere quiet entranced perception of beauty—will seek and find proper use for similar aids. Conrad, that master of prose, constantly exemplifies the possibilities of parallel structure and of repetition.

The sea was polished, was blue, was pellucid, was sparkling like a precious stone, extending on all sides, all round to the horizon—as if the whole terrestrial globe had been one jewel, one colossal sapphire, a single gem fashioned into a planet. And on the lustre of the great calm waters the *Judea* glided imperceptibly enveloped in languid and unclean vapours, in a lazy cloud that drifted to leeward light and slow: a pestiferous cloud defiling the splendour of sea and sky.²

But to the extent that speech remains prose and performs the function of embodying meanings freshly, limpidly, and

² With acknowledgments to the Conrad estate and to the publishers, Doubleday, Doran and Company.









In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

adequately, it exhibits variety in excess of sameness. Its purely formal effect is not of the expected delicately qualified by surprise, but of unceasing novelty qualified ever so slightly by intrusions of rhythmic recurrence. A more familiar, and perhaps juster, statement of this would be that the rhythms of prose are far more numerous and more constantly varied than those of verse; and that both for the making and for the comprehending of great prose a larger span of attention is demanded by its more disguised and intricate repetitions. This would mean that prose which succeeds as art exemplifies, with a somewhat higher demand upon memory, concentration, and intelligence, the same principle as poetry itself: constant arousal of anticipation and its constant realization, but with opportunity left always for the delights of encounter with the unpredictable.

In poetry and prose alike the purely formal aspect of audible rhythm with its blend of the expected and the unexpected constitutes their common participation in the quality of music. It is in music itself that we might expect to find most perfectly exhibited that same synthesis of opposed elements. And certainly it is music first of all the arts that depends upon recurrence of every kind—of tone, of key, of phrase, of theme, and rhythmic pattern and refrain. But just as certainly it is music that most constantly exemplifies incompleteness of recurrence. The experience of it is the purest possible case of an incessant stream of expectations, each one miraculously fulfilled; but it is also the best procurable example of ceaseless encounter with the unforeseen. The fabric of music

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is woven upon a warp of the most inexorable and rigid tone relations established in a system of eternal and unchanging number. But the woof of it is of all things imaginable the most like fluctuating pulses of feeling—never exactly foreseeable, never enduring. A theme repeated but at a lower or a higher level of the scale, or altered in speed, or changed from major to minor, is a thing at once familiar and yet profoundly unknown. In this domain of utterly self-sufficient elements which musical sounds are, it needs but the slightest item of change—a fall instead of a rise, a minor second instead of a major, a chord in place of a single tone, an interpolation or omission of a grace note—to impart to an intimately recognized phrase all the wonder and strangeness of something never before experienced. Just because music is on the one hand so entirely independent of the outer world of things and events, and on the other so entirely one with the ebb and flow of the inner world of emotion and desire, it is able thus to arouse, foster, and then satisfy to perfection the apparently irreconcilable cravings for the predictable and the unpredictable. From beginning to end it is bound together by the incessant iteration of its rhythmic beat, by the overshadowing dominance of its prevalent key, by its constant pressing toward some planned-for goal, heralded at every turn, promised, postponed, approximated to, denied, and always at last attained.

There are a multitude of ways in which the pattern of musical sounds may be made to exhibit this uniformity in the midst of variation. But perhaps these all fall under one or

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the other of two types of device. The theme may itself be subjected to the several kinds of change already mentioned. It may be altered in tempo or in pitch, in loudness, key, or complexity. It may be passed from one instrument to another with their different tone qualities, or move from treble to bass and back again. It may, as in Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, recur not even in the guise of the same intervals but merely as a repetition of the rhythmic form, imposed upon a different sequence of notes.

On the other hand the theme may itself remain unaltered but return in a new context, floated upon a different torrent of sound in the bass. It is a marvellous kind of strangeness in the midst of the already known that thereby results—an effect of a repetition that yet is not a repetition by reason of the constantly altering accompaniment, swelling or fading, rising or falling, and transformed in key and mood. Even more permeated with a sense of difference in the midst of the familiar is the theme when transferred from the upper to one of the lower voices and thereby shadowed or clouded by the layer of sound above it which floats like a curtain of mist—opening and closing and moving in constantly changing rhythmic currents.

From measure to measure the pace of music is never quite the same; from phrase to phrase the way is never through precisely similar changes; and the theme however often repeated could scarcely occur twice over with an identical quality of mood or meaning. For even what precedes and what follows upon any sequence of sounds qualifies them in the

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moment of their passing or in immediate retrospection. Indeed they continue to undergo profound transformations so long as more and yet more is added to the vast procession of which they formed the vanguard. Only if their antecedents and all their consequents were identical could two supposedly unchanged occurrences of a phrase be said to possess exactly the same values.

If we turn from the temporal to the spatial arts, it is the irregularity and novelty contained in asymmetry qualifying the regularity of the symmetrical that we must be prepared to look for. And the subtle blending of uniformity and difference seems indeed to be what characterizes a great masterpiece of architecture, of sculpture, or of painting. A cathedral is built upon an essentially symmetrical plan, but in a thousand ways asymmetry occurs in the working out of that plan. Almost never are the corresponding right and left halves exact duplicates with respect to elaboration of detail. Though possessing nearly always the same general design, pillars and arches in corresponding positions have usually either proportions or decorations that are diversified. Similarly windows, though of the same height and width, are unlike in colour and in the scenes or symbols they depict; and the subdivisions of the triforium gallery differ from those of the clerestory above them.

Since a building is a shaped mass of matter of very great weight and size, it is subject—to a far more serious extent than any statue, and in a literal way that is not true of a picture—to the force of gravity. The urgency of its need for

stability precludes, therefore, in its gross structure very great departures from true symmetry. In most architectural masterpieces we find, then, irregularities and asymmetries in the more detailed construction rather than in the encompassing design. But even to this general principle there are many and notable exceptions. In two of the most beautiful examples of French Gothic—Chartres and Amiens—the west fronts are emphatically irregular, Chartres with spires of unequal height and total dissimilarity of detail, Amiens with towers unlike and one taller than the other. Angers has likewise an asymmetrical design with spires different in height resting upon dissimilar square towers. Strasbourg Cathedral is even more asymmetrical with its single spire. And many Italian churches give an effect of pronounced asymmetry by reason of their one bell-tower attached at the side of the main structure. This is the case with the cathedral of Lucca, with its subjoined campanile, and with the cathedrals of Montepulciano and of Florence and of Siena.

If, for the most part, the total design of most large buildings is rather severely regular, this is compensated for by a wealth of irregularity in the articulation of the parts and in all the details of adornment. But this means that in architecture the element of the arhythmic is to some extent segregated from the rhythmic aspect, regularity being largely concentrated in the scheme of the whole and irregularity in the details. This contrast provides an additional effect of rhythmic alternation. But because of the discrepancy in scale between the elements exhibiting the two contrasted aspects, the

alternation is not of a simple kind but is, as it were, hierarchical. The asymmetry leads up to—feeds into—the symmetry by which it is encompassed. Furthermore, that seeming passage from small asymmetrical details to a large dominating symmetry causes the unsymmetrical parts to acquire some borrowed effect of rhythm. Correspondingly, the symmetrical total design is infected and complicated by those subordinate irregularities. Even the most regularly balanced towers or repeated arches possess a flavour of excitement and strangeness by reason of the many unrepeatable elements of novelty in the accompanying detailed sculpture. Conversely, the vagaries and idiosyncrasies of carved capitals, individuated gargoyles, and profusion of religious symbols seem to participate in formalized and symmetrical design by reason of the larger scheme to which they are contributing elements. And such variety in the midst of uniformity as the builder himself has imparted will at every moment of one's viewing the finished structure be immeasurably enhanced by the accidental but always present complexity and variation due to differences in brightness and shadow, in tone and colour caused by unequal falling of the light.

Again, in all the inventions of the painter and the sculptor it is the interplay of symmetry and asymmetry that we discover. Every great picture is a thing of balance and order and repetition, and in a sense partakes of the quality of pure architecture. Hardly less truly than a gigantic stone structure, the design on canvas stands in need of conforming to the requirements of almost exact mathematical balance. To satisfy

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our unceasing demand for equilibrium it must approximate to the bilateral symmetry of a tetrahedron, a cube or a sphere, or some other regular geometric solid.

But absolute conformity to any such simple shapes as these would be forced, unplausible, and—most fatal—uninteresting. As in the case of poetry it is the ingenuity with which the artist manages to suggest the utterly regular, while indulging in every conceivable departure from it, that measures his formal skill. The squares and cones and triangles and circles which he incorporates for the basic structure of his patterns will never be perfect squares and cones and triangles and circles. They will be sufficiently regular to be easily apprehended, but sufficiently irregular to satisfy the human need for the strange and incalculable. The un-earthly planes and solids of the mathematician's abstract conceiving, when incorporated in impalpable lights and shadows and made to encompass the solid recognizable things of earth, thus lose their sameness and simplicity and become thrilling and mysterious patterns provocative at once of unexpected tensions and movements, and of a very rich and full repose. In place of lines precisely parallel and of exactly equal length, we find lines having a general sameness of direction and merely approximately similar extent.

Balance between the two halves of the picture is always assured, but not by means of objects possessing the same size or brightness, the same interest, or even the same position. In Rembrandt's *Unmerciful Servant* three closely crowded figures are weighed against the magnificent towering figure of

the Judge. In Lorenzetti's *Descent from the Cross* at Assisi it is two mourners and the cross itself that are set in equilibrium with five other mourners and the body of Christ in the other half of the design. In *The Maids of Honor* of Velasquez the little Infanta in the centre stands with a group on either hand, marvellously balanced although consisting in one case of six figures and the dog, in the other of two figures and the huge canvas. In Daumier's *Towman* the slight displacement from the centre of the bowed figure of the man is perfectly compensated for by the shadowy mass of the boat set far to the left.

And not only one but many abstract shapes may dominate in a design. An enclosing square or ellipse or pyramid will often comprehend a multitude of inner diagonals and curves, of horizontals and perpendiculars belonging to a host of accessory and intricately interwoven figures. In Poussin's *Arcadian Shepherds* is to be discovered a great square, a right triangle, the approximation to a pyramid, two huge diagonals in intersection, powerful uprights and horizontals, and subtle suggestions of a bounding sphere. In Titian's *Assumption* the scheme includes a tremendous central axis, cut in the middle by a half circle and resting upon a massive base composed of the crowd of earthly figures. This horizontal is repeated by the narrower mass in the sky, thus delimiting an additional trapezoid tending toward a pyramid that would carry us beyond the canvas—a pyramid further complicated by a high, slender isosceles triangle rising within it.

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In all these instances still further modulated antiphonal effects are present by reason of the repetition of colours, echoing from right to left, from above to below—colours of similar mass but with divergencies in shading, or with identical brightness but differently shaped.

Without this additional source of similarity and dissimilarity contributed by colour, sculpture exhibits more simply than painting, but perhaps more powerfully, the rhythms of symmetry broken by the vagaries of inexact repetition. Every statue is a geometric solid miraculously incorporated in represented living forms. Michelangelo's *Pietà* is a gorgeous pyramid; his bound slaves in the Louvre are superb cones. But in the one case it is a pyramid highly complicated by indentations and protrusions in its silhouette and modifications of its surface—pitted with shadow, rounded and hollowed and sharply cloven. In the case of the bound figures it is cones full of torsions, cones whose carved exteriors suggest an inexhaustible inner wealth of intersecting lines and planes and volumes. In these and all other instances that might be cited there is this dominance in the design of some single geometric solid, with, however, always the effect of an infinity of deviations from the abstract original and always a hint of other simple solids imposing their divergent movements and proportions. The pyramid or cone or cube or sphere to which the outlines of any great statue approximate is never quite fully manifested in its stark simplicity. But this is not all. We find also a substitution of arcs for chords, of chords for arcs, and flattenings and expansions and com-

pressions of the contours, all resulting in the intrusion, into the dominant pattern, of other less insistent forms.

Without need for further argument or illustration it may perhaps be granted that the various arts with their powerfully expressed rhythms exhibit also, throughout, the principle of the arhythmic; and that these two factors constantly intermingle, qualifying each other's unlike effects. Some such alternation and ultimate synthesis of elements adapted to promote the experience on the one hand of regularity, predictability, balance, order, sameness, simplicity, and on the other hand of irregularity, novelty, complexity, strangeness, and the unpredictable, we were led at the start to anticipate. We were prepared to find it on the basis of the diagnosis of human nature as constantly torn between two sets of conflicting desires and needs and under perpetual necessity to discover some deep and lasting healing of its wounds. Actual examination of concrete instances of the formal structure of art amply corroborates this natural but premature expectation.

That the immediately presented sensory materials of art—their mere sound and colour and extended matter and empty space—are subject to such formal treatment as we have given there has never been any question in the minds of critics. What has not, however, been generally recognized is that there may be a form or rhythmic structure, not merely of the outward aspect of a work of art as it is presented to the senses, but also of another, an inner, phase to be apprehended only by the imagination and intelligence. This possible formal ap-

proach to the non-sensuous content of art—a devising for it of a prosody, as it were, of aesthetic meanings—is what we wish now to consider.

In discussing the problem of aesthetic substance we found that, among the basic ideas appearing as the subject-matter of the various arts, there are not only those of motion, materiality, light, and sound but also their correlatives, motionlessness, immateriality, darkness, and silence. And it was noted that between each positive notion and its negative as handled by the artist there is constant interplay and mutual intensification through contrast. This suggests that the kind of rhythmic pattern of meanings that we are now in search of might very well consist of just these antitheses. The test of such a supposition would be the prevalence in the content of art of paired ideas—not only those we have recognized but a multitude of others.

Now, if we consider what it is that drama, the short story, and the novel are concerned with as themes, it is clear that prominent among them would be named such concepts as love and death and youth and hope, poverty, loyalty, avarice, grief; greatness, defeat, war, cruelty, ignorance, stupidity, and degeneration. It is equally clear that these ideas do not occur in simplicity and isolation but always in close conjunction with their opposites. Love is revealed in a context of hate, and in constant clashes with it; and death forever intrudes into the seething tide of life, its fatal resistlessness gaining added terror from the tragic dissonance between them. And similarly poverty is never envisaged except upon

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a background of possible, or of lost, riches; hope is made vivid through ceaseless premonitions of hopelessness by which it is attended; and avarice, grief, cruelty, war, stupidity, and degradation acquire fresh poignancy by reason of the contrary qualities and conditions of generosity and joy, gentleness and peace, intelligence and nobility.

It is life itself that originates all these antitheses, but never with clear-cut demarcations. Nature as we get it in our warm human experience appears to be a thing of subtle and infinitely fine modulations. Day passes into night, sound into silence, cold into warmth, darkness into light, through a series of indistinguishable stages. And youth that is not quite maturity, sickness that just falls short of health, evil that misses good by a faint shadow only, is what is everywhere to be encountered.

On the other hand, in the domain of abstract concepts and analyses, unconditional contrasts and mutual exclusions are abundantly met with. The intellect takes delight in forging sharp antitheses, in devising categorical assertions of disparateness. Whether the rationalizations be those of the philosopher or the sociologist or the scientist, schematic simplifications are offered as acceptable substitutes for the multitudinous world of concrete experience. Reality envisaged after this fashion resembles cold lunar places where to move out of sunshine is to plunge without transition into profundities of blackness. But the moon is dead, and all things like the moon which fail to show blendings of opposites, min-

glings of dark and light, are dead likewise, and alien to the nature of what is living.

Ordinary perception, then, concerned with the heterogeneity of the world of actual happenings, detects on the whole something of a chaos, and emphasizes half-way goods, ambiguous evils, compromises and confusions, with no emergence of clearly focussed contrasting issues. These, however, are fully exploited by the trained intellect with its intentness upon clarity, order, and definiteness. Its weakness is merely that when it disjoins two things it treats them as completely diverse, permitting no aroma of one to suffuse the representation of the other.

In notable distinction, therefore, from ordinary confused perception on the one hand, and from the too rigid conceptualizing of the logical intellect on the other is artistic imagining. Penetrating more deeply than common feeling into the inmost essence of what it deals with, but possessed of that sense of form which it shares with intelligence, it contrives a version of life that combines the virtues at once of emotional comprehension and of reason. Reality as seen by the artist is neither so chaotic as it appears to those immersed in it, nor so simply ordered in contrasted light and shadow, grandeur and meanness, as detached speculation would make it out to be. It is seen as pervaded by rhythms—all the rhythms generated by such contrasted ideas as sweet and bitter, motion and rest, bounded and boundless, life and death, sleep and waking; but the rhythms are not simple and regular.

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They are infinitely modulated, and broken by constant intrusions of the not exactly antithetical: of the arhythmic.

Even for the simple understanding of its meaning, the notion of cowardice is impossible to arrive at out of all relation to the contrasted notion of courage. But in any great tale of human weakness the rendering of the two qualities will make them appear as different as heaven and hell and yet so strangely related that potentialities of both may be simultaneously present in a person, with now the triumph of the one, now of the other. This is the effect that Conrad achieves in his portrayal of Lord Jim. Again, youth and age are antagonistic, but there are retrospective relics of youth in maturity and confused foreshadowings of age even in youth. Hedwig and her father and his father are constantly interchanging the rôles of child and adult. Indeed, with all her transcendent youthfulness she is the only one of the three capable of the intense gravity of ripe understanding; and they are more carefree and childlike than she was destined ever to be. Nobility and baseness, fidelity and infidelity, are alien, but only in the bodiless abstractions of the philosopher are they merely alien. In the actual behaviour of men and in the revealing creations of the dramatist, pitifully and grandly each has roots in the other, each sends out a stream of influence in a continuous pathway leading from one to the other.

A great portrayal of miserliness, as in *Silas Marner*, reveals the instability of the trait, its potential, easy transformation into its own opposite. A study of distrust, as in the tragedy of *Othello*, shows how the emotion attains its mad

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control by reason of an amazing innate trustfulness—a kind of opposite madness of credulity. Nora is the vivid incarnation of blended frivolity and purposiveness; Hamlet of head-long emotionality at once thwarted and fed by intellectualistic indecision; Lear of selfish pettiness nourished by sublime largeness of feeling. Malvolio is epitomized buffoonery, but a buffoonery made mellow and human by incursions of deep pathos. Watteau's Gilles is the imaginative realization of the same interpenetration of divergent effects.

Sympathetically envisaged, mother and child, beggar and king, rustic and sophisticate, friend and enemy, villain and hero, sinner and saint, are no longer juxtaposed as opposites, possessing qualities that are totally exclusive. With his wider, deeper vision the artist, whether dramatist or novelist, painter or poet, is able to convey his sense of maternal strength as qualified by weak dependence upon the child that clings; of the potentate in his arrogance as being, after all, more pitiful than the slave prostrated at his feet. From his higher vantage-ground he can perceive that civilization and savagery, generosity and avarice, pride and humility, ignorance and learning, triviality and momentousness are relative terms, capable of a myriad of degrees of gradation, and of interpenetrations of their meaning. Great madonnas, such as those of Botticelli, are revelations of mysterious alternations and mergings of childlikeness and worldly experience, of self-sufficiency and a vast loneliness. A masterly portrait like Holbein's Anne of Cleves is the proclamation of the paradox of human dignity adulterated by the intense pitifulness of mortal frailty. And

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Rostand's *Cyrano* discloses the land-marks of pain and beatitude melting away under the exalted anguish by which his spirit, like all men's, is overtaken. In art, as in life, pagan fleshliness reveals itself again and again as deeply consonant with the last refinements of utter delicacy; egoism as entirely compatible with the loftiest of unselfish devotions.

And in poetry it is forever the vividly opposed states of feeling and of nature that are at issue—always the poignant portrayal of tragic contrasts and incompatibilities. Day and night, memory and forgetfulness, calm and storm, pity and cruelty, laughter and tears, growth and decay, and all the sharp encroachments of the gay and the sombre, the near and the far, the strange and the familiar, are repeatedly exclaimed over, or hailed, or lamented. The feeling expressed in

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the day for the morrow,

is in a sense typical of the universal outlook of poets.

We look before and after
And pine for what is not:
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught.

So sing they all. It is incessantly with the ironies of existence that they are preoccupied:

O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?





In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston





In the Metropolitan Museum, New York City

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and with the paradoxes of human preference and desire;
telling how

Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard
Are sweeter;

and how the lover

Fain would fling the net, and fain have her free;

and the mistress

. . . dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to poison while the bee-mouth sips;

and how all this world is a place

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow . . .
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

Perhaps nowhere do we find such complete expression of
this pervasive sense of the ceaseless conjoining of things alien
as in that old lament, *In Time of Pestilence*:

Adieu, farewell earth's bliss!
This world uncertain is:
Fond are life's lustful joys,
Death proves them all but toys.
None from his darts can fly;
I am sick, I must die—
Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health:

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Physic himself must fade;
All things to end are made.

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles must devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye;
I am sick, I must die.

Strength stoops unto the grave,
Worms feed on Hector brave;

Wit with his wantonness
Tasteth death's bitterness;

Heaven is our heritage,
Earth but a player's stage.
Mount we unto the sky;
I am sick, I must die—

Lord, have mercy on us!

Here, as in all other cases of rhythms wrought from the antiphonal elements of the world, there is nowhere absolute antithesis, never utter discrepancy between the things contrasted. Rhythm qualified by the arhythmic is what characterizes the structure of the ideas as of the syllables, the words, the lines, and the stanzas through which the meanings are imparted.

Thus far we have considered only that aspect of aesthetic form which has to do with the detail—sequential or juxtaposed—of art. The problem we must now turn to is the work

of art as a totality—its character of wholeness, of organicity, of encompassing unity.

We have seen that the artist, confronted by the conflicting yet simultaneous demands for the quieting effect of the repetitious and for the excitement of novelty, finds a means to their gratification through injecting arhythmic modulations into the rhythms he employs. But he is confronted also by a second demand quite as insistent as the first: the demand for a widening of the narrow limits of ordinary attention. Human consciousness is supposed to differ from that of the brute by the larger span of what it can grasp in a single act of awareness. But even the specious here, and the specious now, add but a narrow fringe of immediate memory and immediate expectation for the extending of the small focal area of momentary perception. And what, as creatures struggling against the bonds of animal heritage, we deeply desire is a still greater freedom to range, without effort, farther afield. Some liberation of this kind is, we have seen, facilitated by rhythm, inasmuch as it fortifies memory and offers a basis for prophecy. But a larger span of attention than that so provided is what we crave. And it is this need that the artist meets in his contriving of a single unified effect. In so far as he extracts unity from elements widely extended in space, distantly located in time, he provides a way for consciousness to attain a scope as ample as that of the apprehended creation.

Now, the rhythms of art, we have seen, are the counterpart of the rhythms which pervade the living organism—an echo of its ordered functionings, a reflection of the symmetry of

its parts. But the unity characteristic of a work of art is no less surely the image of the *oneness* of the living creature—its complex organization in which are brought into ultimate and vital relationship its several organs and elements, uniting musculature and brain, glands and nervous system, respiratory apparatus and heartbeat. This unity of man's bodily life is a unity of rhythms, the final encompassing rhythmic organization of its rhythmic parts. And so it is also with the art which he creates. Its organic character is but the rhythmic unification of the multitude of smaller rhythms which compose its content and form.

An effect of completeness, of unity, is the crowning effect of the work of art, the effect without which it is a thing amorphous and dead. Achievement of this effect constitutes for the artist his chief task in the total composition of his work. And for its achievement initial solution of the problem of the absolute limits of spatial or of temporal magnitude is a matter of primary importance.

In the case of a poem, Poe suggests that about one hundred lines is the proper length. This appears brief, but the great Odes of Keats fall well within these dimensions. The criterion that Poe himself suggests—that a poem should be easily read at a single sitting—would not, however, be alone sufficient to explain the demand for such extreme brevity. A symphony may very well be heard at one sitting but its length is many times that of a hundred lines of poetry. Why may the one form of art be with impunity so much longer than the other?

Simply because unity of effect in a poem is strictly de-

pendent upon the maintenance of a single mood, while unity in music is compatible with a crowded procession of moods—as many and as varied as the feelings that range from the pinnacle of hope to the profundities of despair, from the blackness of melancholy to the blinding radiance of rapture. Poetic unity is the kind of unity that would be found if the wide landscape of heaven and earth—all the habitations of gods and men—were viewed under the light of a single, chosen moment between spring and autumn, between dawn and sunset. Poetry's function is to impart coherence to the welter of heterogeneous elements making up the life of the spirit by throwing about them the veil of a single intense emotion.

The unity proper to music, on the other hand, is the kind belonging to one landscape as it undergoes the transformations incident to the incessant changes of light characteristic of the several hours of the day, of the several seasons of the year. The rôle of music is to display the infinity of emotional effects of which a theme, incredibly simple, is capable. The single mood cannot be long maintained under peril of emotional exhaustion; the single theme, running the gamut of its protean changes, is a source of perennial renewal of the spirit. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony could have been double its length; and we should have been thankful as for the prolonging of a miracle. Yet the greater part of it is but amplification and variation of the rhythmic pattern of the first four notes of its two opening measures. To an almost unprecedented extent the entire four movements exhibit articulated

and perfected organic unity. Of a far longer symphony than Beethoven's Fifth—Schubert's Symphony in C Major—Schumann declared that it was of heavenly length.

The mood of the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*—the feeling-tone of subdued yet rapturous contemplation—could have been protracted beyond the mere fifty lines allowed it; but without question its brevity means gain in intensity and concentration. The languorous melancholy of the *Ode to a Nightingale* might have been sustained for more than its eighty lines; but the experiment might also have been perilous. Swinburne maintains the mood of *Ave atque Vale* for one hundred and ninety-eight lines—through eighteen stanzas of eleven lines each. But its effect is really less lyrical than symphonic. Much of its emotional tone is produced by sheer resonance of repeated sounds, and by the large surges of rhythmic pulses.

Most poetry achieves part of its total unitary effect through repetition of the smaller unity of the single stanza. The determination of the possible temporal limits of this is subject to the conditions that control all aesthetic magnitudes: the capacity of human attention. Just as a line cannot consist of more than six feet—and that at its peril—so stanzaic length probably cannot exceed that of the sonnet: lines to the number of fourteen. The Chaucerian stanza contains only seven lines; the Spenserian nine; and nine make up the stanza of Shelley's *Adonais*, twelve of his *Cloud*. The kind of rhyme scheme chosen and the relative length of the successive lines may, of course, assist so greatly in the enlargement of the

span of attention that a relatively long stanza will be more easily apprehended than a far shorter one. Of all the parts of a stanza probably the last line is the most crucial with regard both to its length and to its linkage through rhyme with an earlier line. Lengthening of the final line, as in Shelley's *Skylark*, proves on the whole less propitious for the binding of a stanza together than is its sudden shortening. This is clearly illustrated if we compare

Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

with

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
 Which make thee terrible and dear,—
 Swift be thy flight!

The effect of *rightness*, of *finality*, produced by the pattern of any familiar stanza form—of the rondeau, the rondel, the ballade, but most of all of the sonnet—is at least largely arbitrary, a matter of convention and long habituation. And this is probably the case likewise with multitudes of other accepted artistic traditions. Why should it seem on the whole more proper that a symphony should have four movements, a play one or three or five acts, a cathedral one or two or

three or five towers or spires? Perhaps convention merely. But in the domain of aesthetic experience what *seems* right *is* right, whatever the source of the seeming may have been. In that domain no distinction between good and evil, real and unreal, obtains that does not rest upon the sole sanction of immediate significance for emotion. There is no possible revelation from Mt. Sinai to any other effect, nor any contrary dictum to be listened to from all the statutes of the Medes and Persians.

And yet the situation is not quite so simple as this would seem to make it. Acceptances and rejections constantly occur that are not only arbitrary but factitious—grounded upon feelings that are false to the deeper sort of appreciation. It is probably little more than narrow academic conservatism that makes us regard architectural elements borrowed from the Chinese, Moorish, Greek, and Egyptian manner of building as necessarily incompatible. Historical considerations ought here to be excluded, and valuations should be based instead upon perception of genuine emotional congruities. An effect of splendour is intrinsically incompatible with that of austerity; exotic richness of elaboration intrudes rudely as a rule into an effect of simplicity. Awareness of such qualities as these is what should determine the feeling for architectural unity. Or, rather, a sense of fundamental congruity of feeling-tone between the different elements is one of the important conditions for a realization of that unity. Another is a recognition of proper masses and proportions—of adequate support for ample burden, with never too much of

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either. As a third condition may be cited a factor vastly significant in all the arts for the production of an effect of rightness and necessity: total absence of the irrelevant.

Since architecture, painting, and sculpture are all arts of space the question of absolute limits of size pertains to all alike. Of the three arts, architecture is the best adapted to facilitate immense extensions of spatial apprehension; and except for engineering difficulties there are practically no limits to the potential size of a building. An immense edifice, lofty as the heavens and with a dim forest of columns diminishing into the distance of remote shadows, could be no less easily apprehended as a whole than any simple and compact Etruscan tomb. But, on the other hand, if the size of a structure be too inconsiderable it will cease altogether to produce the effect of architecture and will acquire instead something of the quality of sculpture. Sculpture in its turn, if of gigantic proportions, will inevitably encroach upon the domain of architecture.

What unity of effect in a statue or a painting exactly consists of is not altogether easy to say. As in all forms of art, simplicity, definiteness of design, absence of irrelevancies, and perfect congruity of mood in the several parts contribute importantly to unified effect. A revealing demand is that of Michelangelo: that a statue should be so simplified and compressed, so devoid of excessive protrusions, that it could be safely rolled down a hill without fear of breaking. The Winged Victory would not stand this test, nor the Apollo Belvedere; which is one reason at least for their inferiority

to the greatest examples of the Archaic. Compactness, condensation, as if all the parts were turning inward, seeking some hidden point of equilibrium at the centre, is unquestionably the character intrinsic to most of the greatest sculpture. It is that of Michelangelo's own best work; and of the weighty, solemn, portentous sculpturing of the Egyptians. It is the effect of the very moving and supremely unified masterpieces of the Archaic Greek period, and of the early French.

In sculpture and painting alike, as we have already noted, great design means always suggestion of the informing presence of regular geometric plane or solid figures. If one asks whether any of these shapes are more congruous in emotional effect with the essential character of certain types of subject-matter, affirmations and denials are both forthcoming. Ethel Puffer points out that dominant horizontal emphases are natural in landscape painting and productive of a mood of quietness, and that the pyramidal shape is most common in pictures of the madonna, and most appropriate. But Barnes places in illuminating juxtaposition a still-life of Cézanne and Titian's *Entombment*, of which the abstract schemes are practically identical. It appears to be through some inspired welding together of the diverse elements at his command that the painter contrives his ultimate effect of perfect organic unity. In the greatest work there seems to be a not exactly describable handling of colour, light, and shadow, mass and line, with a convergence of effects producing that mysterious quality of justness, of inevitability. The sense of unity derivable from any great painting is always a sense that, from the

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foundations of the world, precisely that combination of design and subject, of distribution of light and darkness, substance and space, had been waiting to be proclaimed. It is this effect that we find in the canvases of Rembrandt, and of El Greco, and of the Venetians.

There remains to consider the problem of unity as it presents itself to the writer of the play and the novel. And Aristotle's three-fold demand for unity of time, place, and action at once offers itself for our approval. Unity of action may well be translated into Percy Lubbock's phraseology as the requirement that imaginative handling of plot and character should involve a theme expressible in a single proposition. *War and Peace*, he notes, misses this perfection, because the book has two themes: youth and age as well as war and peace. There seems no room for controversy on this issue. Quite as essential for an effect of unity as consistency of mood in a lyric is consistency of topic, of some predominant concern, in any form of fiction. By no means all works possessing great power and interest are adequate in this respect. Perhaps nowhere indeed in the domain of art is deficiency in unified form so prevalent as in novels and plays. This means, if unity is aesthetically so important as we are taking it to be, that it is experiments in these two *genres* that most often fail as artistic creations.

Frequently the reason for this unsucccess is disregard of the somewhat out-of-date Aristotelian requirement for the unities of time and place. It is noteworthy that Ibsen is scrupulous in observing them. In so doing he is restricted in his choice of

plots; but that he could tell a story such as that of *Rosmersholm* without transgressing the Aristotelian canons demonstrates the actual freedom that remains to an artist even when he subjects himself to very hampering restrictions. There is no question that *Rosmersholm*, related straightforwardly with the use of the full stretch of time that the plot implies, would have been devoid of its present terrific concentration and intensity.

But regard for spatial and temporal unity will be thus rewarded, always. So uniformly effective for the production of a character of compactness, an effect of rightness and inevitability, is respect for these two unities that the burden of proof must rest upon the dramatist who refuses to avail himself of their aid.

In drama and novel alike there are many substitutes for the two kinds of integrated effect that result from use of a limited span of time or of a narrowly restricted location. Very great dominance of a single mood is one possibility. Excessive emphasis upon a single character is another. Unity of effect may be achieved when a theme is repeated in the life-history of the successive generations as they pass, as in D. H. Lawrence's *Rainbow*. But it is interesting that, whereas modern dramatists are tending away from the unities of Aristotle, many writers of the modern novel seem as definitely to be inclining toward their use. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf are pioneers in this adventure; but they have followers. The superior dimensions of the novel as compared with the

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play would seem to render observance of spatial and temporal restrictions unnecessarily constraining, causing the novel to forfeit its almost unique opportunity for vast temporal enlargement of the span of attention. For the novel is to time what architecture is to space: a superb means of organizing and integrating for consciousness magnitudes not ordinarily apprehended in clearness and simplicity.

For all forms of imaginative writing the constant requirement holds that, to attain unified effect, extraneous detail must be eliminated. In the perfect novel no deed or word would be noted that did not bear upon the ultimate issues of plot or development of character; no idiosyncrasy or trait expatiated upon that did not contribute to the true version of its possessor; and no appearance in the external world described unless either as an outward counterpart of inner spiritual states of the *dramatis personae* or as their ironical antitheses—and a source of yet further emotional disturbance.

The perfect novel might combine the subtleties of blended regularity and irregularity which occur in rhyme and refrain in poetry; the beauties of symmetry qualified by the unsymmetrical, such as are to be found in a statue or a painting or a cathedral; and that marvellous kind of repetition of a theme eternally varied and transformed, which music exemplifies. In short, it holds promise of exhibiting with superb completeness the basic principle of all aesthetic form: synthesis of rhythm and the arhythmic. And this as it applies

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alike to the structure of meanings and to the structure of their sensory embodiment, and to the work of art both in its minute details and in its total organization.

Perhaps the perfect novel never has been written; perhaps it never will be. For its scope is scarcely less than that of all the other arts combined. Its potentialities, consequently, are virtually infinite.

CHAPTER VI

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

EXCEPT in moments of unreflective and unbridled enthusiasm, we all know quite well that comparison between things of the spirit is unwise and dangerous—that it translates inevitably into quantitative terms what in the last analysis are pure incomparable qualities. Yet there come to all of us these moments of weakness when, subdued or dazzled by a supreme instance of the great painting or sculpture of the world, we seem to find in one of these two arts but a blurred image, a far-off and imperfectly realized presentment of the other. Only we disagree from one to another as to which is the original, which its rival. And not even for all moments of any one experience does the balance fall the same way. There may be occasions when the sumptuous completeness of the painter's gorgeous world will make the sculptor's utmost endeavour appear by comparison austere and barren; but other occasions also when the unparalleled simplicity and finality of perfect workmanship in stone may seem to preclude forever as a kind of sacrilege any comparison with it of even the finest that the art of the painter has managed to

achieve. For the most part, however, each of us inclines to honour one of these two modes of expression high above the other, even while recognizing that neither can possibly fill the diversified rôles of both.

Such inclining reveals the predominance, within the system of one's preferences, of one or the other of two groups of fundamental sympathies. If light in all its chromatic variety makes an insistent appeal of such strength that lines and masses devoid of it appear seriously impoverished, then we shall be likely to favour the art in which this item of sensory experience is richly displayed. Sculpture, except as it may employ coloured substances, is practically debarred from the marvellous and multitudinous effects which only the spectrum can yield. We must turn, therefore, to the works of the painter if we want design complicated and enhanced by this element.

Again, if the shapes and postures which the bodies of animal and man may exhibit are not sufficient for us, and if we crave besides the counterfeit presentment of all the aspects and moods of the inanimate world, we should be disinclined to barter even a few masterpieces of painting for all the greatest sculpture of all the ages. The art of carved marble is necessarily limited in its choice of subject to the forms of living creatures. And while painting may, though with diminished power and completeness, render these as well, it is free also to range the earth and the heavens for subjects fit for inclusion in its inventions.

And lastly, if the presentation of space solidly filled leaves









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us yearning for that vast sense at once of lightness and of power which volumes of yawning emptiness induce, then once more we shall find sculpture insufficient; we shall turn with renewed appreciation to that art in which space as well as material reality is magnificently exploited.

But if on the other hand not colour, nor the varied and inexhaustible appearances of the natural world, nor the sublimity of spatial magnitude have for us a significance comparable with that of the solemn and brooding massiveness of cloven stone, then the art of the painter with all its versatility and sensuous opulence will fail to win our unhesitating preference.

We shall need to see in what ways sculpture can compensate for its several lacks as compared with the more flexible and diversified art of painting. But first we shall survey that rival art more closely to see just what its greater diversity involves. There is, says Spengler,

no such thing as *the* art of Painting, and any one who compares a drawing of Raphael, effected by outline, with one of Titian, effected by flecks of light and shade, without feeling that they belong to two different arts; any one who does not realize a dissimilarity of essence between the works of Giotto or Mantegna—relief, created by brush-stroke—and those of Vermeer or Goya—music, created on coloured canvas—such a one will never grasp the deeper questions.

And he amplifies this later, thus:

What distinguishes painting as it was before, from painting as it was after, the shift from Florence to Venice—or, to

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put it more definitely, what separates the painting of Raphael and that of Titian as two entirely distinct arts—is that the plastic spirit of the one associates painting with relief, while the musical spirit of the other works in a technique of visible brush-strokes and atmospheric depth-effects that is akin to the chromatic of string and wind choruses.

An example is here masterfully set for a more extended exposition of painting as a multiple art to be in no wise judged through all its immense range in terms of a single set of criteria. But it is not alone the technical differences peculiar to its many schools and traditions that produce this need to distinguish in its large genus a number of separate species; nor does the related circumstance that some painting resembles sculpture and some is more like music tell the complete tale of its many incommensurable effects. There are still further grounds of distinction to take account of.

We may start with the antithesis made by Spengler between painting that is essentially plastic and painting that makes virtually the appeal of sound. And from this we may go on to venture the statement that there is no art upon whose domain painting does not at some moments encroach. There is, as Spengler says, painting that is sculptural inasmuch as the figures it portrays are almost detached from their background, so forcible and clearly articulated is their three-dimensionality. The work of Giotto and Mantegna, but also that of Signorelli and of Ingres, belongs in this category. And there is painting that is more nearly architectural in its suggestion by reason of the large and solemn scale of its sym-

metries, the simplicity and completeness of its overarching enclosure of space, and the wideness and depth of that space. The *Sposalizio* of Raphael gives something of this intimation of architectural affinities; as does Piero della Francesca's *Annunciation*, with its startling profundity effected by rapid foreshortening of the arches forming the central background. The lovely annunciatory angel and madonna to right and left are like translucent pallid designs in glass, making it appear as if we had been ushered into the interior of a cathedral.

Then, again, the art of painting may be compared, as we have seen, in some of its effects to music. Only instead of this analogy finding its justification in "the painting of Watteau and Fragonard, and the art of Gobelines and pastels," as Spengler has it, the truer exemplifications would seem to be composition in which the swift rhythmic pattern recalls the moving arabesques of sound set forth in such music as that of Bach and Haydn. The figures of the three Graces in Botticelli's *Primavera* are music made visible, if anywhere in the world such a paradox may occur at all. And there are instances in the work of Arthur Davies, and of Uccello, and a great deal in the creations of the Sieneese, of flowing line whose only analogue is a fine, thin melody on a flute.

The landscapes of Corot, and many works of Watteau, of Turner, and of Whistler, with all their virtues proper to the art to which they belong, do yet unquestionably also suggest analogies with poetry—not poetry of narrative, but pure lyric. Certain moods are essentially lyrical—moods of

dreaminess, wistfulness, gentle quietude and contemplation—whether evoked by melodious speech or by suffused light, pale colour, misty forms, faint shadows, and atmospheric effects. There are English portraits, and Scotch, in which the more legitimate effects of a visual art masterfully handled are added to by the effects belonging to the art of Burns and Housman.

Finally, the boundaries of painting and of drama cannot be everywhere uniformly maintained. Roger Fry deploras the intrusion of this quality of the dramatic into much of the work of Rembrandt; and from the same point of view a similar lament might be voiced over examples of Veronese and of Tintoretto—even of Piero, of Blake, and of El Greco. But the kind of kinship with drama obtaining in these varied cases is, once more, not that precisely of narrative, but rather of intense climactic effect—a sense of crisis. It may be that it is only where human beings are present and issues of life and death and profound experience are involved that this dramatic element occurs; and yet the actual seat of it may at least sometimes be an almost abstract aspect of the pictured design. It is in some mysterious manner the juxtaposition of towering, exaggeratedly elongated forms and the sharp antithesis of white clouds and black profundities of space that in El Greco's *Allegory* is the source of the effect of crisis. The thing is dramatic after the manner of a thunderstorm, of an eclipse of the sun, of the aurora borealis. Similarly huge massings of crowded figures such as occur in some of the canvases of the Venetians, and tremendous contrasts

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of light and shadow which Rembrandt contrived, may, even without any assistance from the factor of *illustration*, or suggested narrative, produce effects comparable in emotional quality to the death of Othello, to the ghost scene in Boris Godounov, or to Macbeth's encounter with the witches on the moor.

Painting would need to be called a multiple art if its various developments were to be distinguished after no other manner than through recognition of their respective sculptural, architectural, musical, lyrical, or dramatic affinities. But there are still two other grounds for its division into distinct domains.

Exploiting of colour has already been referred to as one of the marks of painting which differentiate it from sculpture, but it would be a gross injustice to evaluate all painting alike in terms of its prismatic success. Out of the great painting of all the ages only certain schools, and certain masters of those schools, and certain works of those masters, are pre-eminent in this respect. It would be absurd to rate much of Sienese art and Michelangelo's frescoes and canvases of Leonardo by the same canons as may be applied to Giorgione, Bellini, and Rubens. These achieved, to the full, power in the handling of colour. The glories of those others are of another order. The sumptuousness of flesh bathed in sunshine or faintly shadowed under an intense luminosity may be demanded always of Renoir. Yet greater artists cannot be expected to exhibit, in addition to their own peculiar merits, this particular kind of magnificence. The revelation of the

miraculous beauty of light on land and water and upon the white walls of a cathedral may be the proper basis for our appreciation of Monet, but it must be for different qualities altogether that we shall praise any one less enamoured of light as composing the very substance of the world.

A painter's claim to greatness as a colourist may even reside in his conquest, not of the entire gamut of the spectrum but of certain portions of it only. Rembrandt's renown for expert handling of light depends largely upon the extraordinary range of his palette from bright gold through saffron and amber to all the wealth of ruddy browns shadowed down to black. And the primary reason for one's high estimate of many an artist as a superlative master of the luminous beauty of colour may well be the pre-eminence in his work of some single colour rendered with particular depth and fulness, particular splendour and intensity. Of this kind is the blue in Raphael and in Odilon Redon, in the enchanted Elysian fields of Fra Angelico's work, and in that marvellous fresco hidden in the shadows of the church at Assisi of St. Martin by Simone. If greatness of colour is in no way incompatible with any of the other sources of greatness, then the perfect painting might well be expected to exhibit the beauty dependent upon its effects in conjunction with other, perhaps more essential, kinds of virtue. But in the art of painting as it is offered to us, sometimes this variety of perfection is forthcoming, and sometimes not.

For there are other quite unrelated kinds of possible em-

phasis by virtue of which a masterpiece in this art may be distinguished. Two of these have already been noted in our earlier recognition of painting that is sculpturesque and painting that remotely resembles music. Intense realization of the three-dimensionality of solid figures—what Berenson calls their tactile values—distinguishes much work that may or may not be notable in other respects. In Berenson's opinion a large part of the greatness of the Florentine school, and of Giotto in particular, is the result of its tactile qualities—its power to induce strong images of touch, of strain, of pressure.¹ Much of the highly simplified work of the moderns is notable for the same reason. This emphasis upon the thickness and material weight and resistance of objects militates against the apprehension of their silhouettes as patterns moving across the field of vision. To judge Byzantine art, and much of the Chinese and Japanese, and the work of Duccio, by the standards applicable to the work of Giotto and Cézanne would be to approach them from an entirely irrelevant point of view.

For the artistic significance of all these things is, once more, quite differently grounded. Sienese art and the figure painting of the Orientals shows a primarily two-dimensional emphasis, with a consequent emphatic emergence of pattern delimited by swift, undulating line. Persian miniatures, the mosaics at Ravenna, Greek vase painting, Utamaro's drawings, Korin's *Wave* or a Ming tiger must be estimated in

¹ See illustration 3.

terms of the unique beauty they all possess: that of miraculous line, fluent as water, motile as streaming mist, rapid and light as flame.²

Perhaps the only other emphasis to be correlated with the three emphases already cited is that which Berenson finds pre-eminently in the work of the Umbrians: facility in imparting the illusion of three-dimensional empty space. But the leaders of this particular group of Italian painters were by no means the only possessors of this talent. Not less notable than the work of Perugino and Raphael in this respect are the masterpieces of Chinese and Japanese landscape painting. And Rembrandt also was master of the art of evoking the large effect of the third dimension; Piero could produce it when he cared to, and many others. For those to whom the emotion peculiar to an enlarged experience of spatial distance is one of the greatest emotions derivable from art or nature, expert production of it would be rated high as an indispensable item of aesthetic appeal. The multitude of painters in whom the power never developed would be correspondingly lowered in merit—but only if demand be made of all men to possess all virtues, which of course it need not be.

A third important ground for distinguishing between several arts of painting is that which underlies the employment of such familiar categories as those in common use: portraiture, the art of still-life and landscape, and historical, symbolic, and religious painting. All such nomenclature

² See illustrations 14 and 16.

frankly and distinctly rests upon acceptance of the view that difference in subject-matter is a legitimate and significant kind of difference to take account of. But in recent years controversy on this issue has become acute. We must therefore consider briefly the two opposing opinions that have been brought forward.

In an earlier chapter a crucial sentence from the writing of Clive Bell was quoted to the effect that presence of representation in a work of art may or may not be harmful for its just appreciation, but always it will be irrelevant. The passage continues:

For, to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions . . . we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space.

Much later in the argument he vouchsafes the further comment:

To help the spectator to appreciate our design we have introduced into our picture a representative or cognitive element. This element has nothing whatever to do with art. . . . As we know, a design can be composed just as well of realistic forms as of invented; but a fine design composed of realistic forms runs a great risk of being aesthetically underrated. We are so immediately struck by the representative element that the formal significance passes us by.

Now there can be no possible question that the emphasis thus laid upon the formal aspects of painting is vastly im-

portant and much needed for the edification of those to whom, mistakenly, the main interest in a picture is its success in telling a story. But for those by whom formal significance—all the qualities resulting from values of line, mass, light, and shade, the qualities of pure design—are already rated as of primary importance, a total rejection of every other factor as irrelevant cannot but appear egregiously fanatical. A far more reasonable interpretation would seem to be that voiced by Rhys Carpenter:

. . . it is a plausible theory that one essential distinction between esthetic and ordinary contemplation is the appreciation of abstract formal values in the field of vision and the fusion of these with the normal process of recognition of the objects, so that there results an emotional (instead of a merely pragmatic or practical) apprehension. . . . From the fusion of the two aspects of a line—its purely formal value with its representational quality—arises a new thing which I call the esthetic or artistic emotion. This new thing, which may be surprisingly intense and vivid, *is not discoverable either in the represented object per se or in the mere formal value of the lines used.* . . . Pure form to the detriment of representational fidelity, or representational fidelity to the detriment of pure form—both are esthetically mistaken; for both tend to suppress an essential factor of the artistic appeal.

If we accept this inclusion of recognition, not of geometric shapes only, but also of the forms and states of actual objects, as a proper element in the appreciation of visual art, then difference of subject is left to us as a significant difference. But if we reject the inclusion we are reduced to ignoring subject altogether and are compelled to evaluate, in exclu-

sively formal terms, two such works as the Titian *Entombment* and the Cézanne still-life already cited as virtually identical with respect to composition. To quote Carpenter once more:

It is only when this abstract play of lines and angles and surface-shapes appears incarnate in recognizable objects derived from the real world of my experience, that it seems to get sufficient emotional focus and bearing for me to appreciate clearly . . . its character and range.

This is the reef on which non-representational sculpture and painting strikes and founders . . . no matter how we educate our sensibilities, we can never experience anything tangible or definite out of these disembodied pure forms. The play cannot go on without the characters. . . . Representational art is representational not by accident but because only so can it have its full effect.

Once more, if we do not agree with this dictum, then, in our contemplation of a portrait of Fouquet, a still-life of Chardin, a landscape of Sesshin, a madonna of Cima, an interior of de Hooch, we shall be called upon to neglect the wide diversity of interest and character, of dramatic and all other emotional values attaching to these various kinds of subject. But if, with full recognition that the first claim upon our attention in visual art is its essentially visual appeal—the spatial composition of it in terms of light and mass—we admit also a second kind of interest, we have a basis for a recognition of many different arts of painting distinguishable as to content.

Now, we might very well rate as of greater intrinsic interest

than the world of human personality the inanimate world of nature. Even so we might still find a higher kind of power in the portraits of Titian and Pisanello and Lorenzo Lotto, of Moroni and Clouet and Velasquez, than in the still-life studies of all the Chardins and Derains in existence. Again, if we should seem to discover in the canvases of de Hooch and Terborch and Vermeer a beauty far transcending that of the landscapes of, let us say, a Ruysdael or a Rousseau, this by no means would imply that the space and light gathered into a compact interior is to us a substitute for the sunshine, shadow, and green amplitude of meadow and forest. Responsiveness to the peculiar qualities of the varied elements of the world need not interfere with judgments of a purely formal, perhaps esoteric, kind. But it may enrich them.

There are few artists whose works are to be so satisfactorily described in these formal terms of sheerly abstract design as may be those of Blake. But to render an account of his designs for Blair's *Grave*, for Dante, and for the Book of Job in those terms alone would be almost a blasphemy. Not that illustration in the ordinary sense need here be admitted, still less allegory or symbolism. His terrific Archangels, and horses, and souls in torment, his winds and wings and desolate men and women, are the product of an imagination that can be compared only with that of Dante, of Milton, of Isaiah, and of the writer of the book of Revelation. Only, unlike their genius, his was expressing itself through a plastic medium.³

³ See illustration 19.

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It is an austere and limited world that we encounter in passing from the rich art of the painter to that of chiseled blocks of stone. Bereft of colour, reduced in its choice of subject to the forms of living beings, and so grave and solid by reason of its materials that it is forced to content itself with essentially grave and quiet effects—such is the world by which we are confronted. There is no need here to look for all the varied moods of different hours and different seasons, nor for a mellowing and transforming of objects by distance with its intervening air, its mists, and shadows. There is here no chance to distinguish a multitude of different arts gathered within the compass of one immense universe of expression. Perhaps the only possible ground for its division is that some sculpture is concerned with the depicting of brute creation and the rest with human—or at least with creatures, whether of this world or of another, possessing human lineaments.

But despite all limitations and constraints, so haunting and powerful is this art that to its devotees it may appear comparable with only the most exalted products of any other genus of emotional expression. As compared in particular with painting it may easily seem, by reason of its greater austerity, to rise to loftier heights, though correspondingly also to sink to levels of far deeper degradation. For the price that this art pays for achieving its very high moments is that when it fails it sinks to the depths of the incredibly weak and foolish.

All sculpture, it is clear, falls into one or the other of two groups: animal portraiture or human. Paintings too there

have always been of animal forms even from the time of the early cave dwellers with their birds and bison. The Egyptians left us designs of birds and beasts, and the Greeks painted fish and horses, serpents and dogs, as well as carved them. There are marvellous painted representations of lions and tigers by the Chinese, of birds and dogs and sheep and horses by the early Italian and all later schools. But from the beginning it has, somewhat strangely, been in the hard, cold shapes of stone that the animal kingdom has found its most adequate representation. Strangely, because there would appear to be an almost too great discrepancy between the materials with which the sculptor works and the feathered wings, the sinuous bodies, of the birds of the air and the beasts of the jungle. Painters have a world to draw upon composed not only of things that move but also of the motionless. The sculptor, in his restriction to the living, ever-changing creatures of that world, has no background of quiescent objects to aid him in establishing a pervasive effect of stillness. This effect he must impart directly to the forms he depicts, giving the motionlessness of things that move.

But of all things in the world endowed with essential motility animals are pré-eminent. Without their soaring and mad flights, their prancing and rearing, their leaping and lithe running, birds and horses and dogs would be bereft of their most deeply characteristic attributes. These movements of theirs the sculptor cannot give. He must either choose only their moments of complete relaxation, in death or sleep, or he must surprise them in fleeting moments caught in the midst

of the chase—crouching and about to spring, or terrified and transfixed; or—almost after the manner of human beings—brooding and contemplative. This last effect is actually one very frequently chosen. Much of the great animal sculpture of the ages shows the brute world as if there already belonged to it incipient traits of the world of men above it.

A very great deal of the sculptured rendering of animal life gives it, however, its sheer animality, mysterious and profound. And it is a magnificent array of portraiture that is offered, ranging from primitive carvings of reindeer and seal to the beautifully formalized reliefs of Gaudier-Brzeska. There are the lions and birds and bulls and horses of the Assyrians; the elephants and lions of India; and magnificent Egyptian cats, horses, dogs, and birds. There are the gorgeous horses of the Parthenon frieze, and all the other Greek horses, and the marvellously decorative coiled serpents of relief work. There are the Chinese elephants, lions, horses, and tigers, as well as the lions of the Chaldaeans, and the Etruscan wolf, the Roman boar, the fantastic beasts of the Gothic imagination, and all the superb horses of Renaissance monuments. It is an art in itself, this art of animal sculpture, and it numbers among its masterpieces some of the most sublime examples of carved stone. It comprises that tragic and incomparable fragment, the head of the horse of Night, from the tympanum of the Parthenon—a head with dilated nostril, staring eye, strained muscles and laid-back ears. It includes an Egyptian hawk of the New Empire, formalized but very real, with smooth folded wings, head upraised, and a per-

vasive quality of brooding somnolence. It includes a Han tiger, leaning forward, set high on its haunches, with thick neck, straightened front limbs, and an effect of enormous reserves of strength. But they are too many to tell, and we must turn to that other art of sculpture which has as its concern the human body, whether naked, draped, or fully clothed, and exhibited in all the varied beauties of male and female, young and old, exuberant and ascetic.

There is no type of personage that sculpture has not at some time seized upon to glorify. They are all there, rendered in the serene and magnificent terms of sensitive stone: warriors, gods, emperors, sages, heroes, prophets, saints, and athletes. Queens and goddesses are among them, and priestesses and dancers; and common men and women made significant by joy or grief. There are cupids and fauns and young children; and adventurers on horseback; and men drawing the bow, wielding the sword, or bearing a shield or a sceptre. And maidens, pouring a libation, or holding idly a mirror, a goblet, a flower. And youths, beautiful in death, or transfigured with the fire of young manhood; or overpowered with weariness, or melancholy.

Perhaps there is no mood of which sculpture is capable that cannot be exhibited by means of any one of its three devices: by low relief or high, or carving in the round. And yet certain emotional effects are more appropriate to one of these or to another, and to each degree of three-dimensional emphasis pertain certain qualities peculiar to it alone. Relief of whatever degree partakes somewhat of the versatility of



Photograph by Alinari





In the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



painting. And particularly is this true when all gradations of emergence are combined in the same design. Then indeed we may be said to have an art that is the marriage of the two unlike arts—or, better, their miraculous progeny. And more often than not relief exhibits this peculiar richness when barely defined silhouette is amplified by the light and shadow of more boldly projecting masses. Even Verrocchio's enchanting low portrait-relief of Scipio is enhanced by the more vividly projecting helmet with its dragon wings. And the Parthenon frieze in its unsurpassed employment of every sculptural device over and over achieves this most superb effect. It is impossible to say just why the delimitation of a design in terms that are neither those of painting nor exactly those of full sculpture should be productive of such utter beauty as it is. We must simply recognize the mystery and be thankful that the genius of so many artists of the greatest periods should have chosen to express itself through these means.

It would surely be a quite different set of qualities that would be forthcoming if the low reliefs of Egyptian tombs, or of the carved Assyrian epic of Ashur-nasir-pal were translated into terms of full three-dimensional forms. Or if the same were done with the designs of the bronze doors of Ghiberti or of the coins of Pisanello, or, most of all, of early Greek gravestones. They would acquire an effect almost of another art, not less great perhaps, certainly not properly comparable, but in any case devoid of the peculiar magic of the actual version.

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The qualities and potentialities of carving in low relief appear to be peculiarly adapted to convey two effects of very different character: that of lightness and swift movement; and that of gravity and repose. There are friezes of dancing figures by Indian carvers and by Greek which, beyond any possibility of doubt, would have missed a large part of their grace and fleetness, their incredible buoyancy and motility, if they had been executed in very high relief or in the round. Rendered as silhouettes that are barely raised from the background, they possess the insubstantiality, the fluency almost, of music.

On the other hand, the solemn figures of archaic Greek funeral designs are pervaded with an intense gravity, a repose, a stillness, that would seem to be peculiar to the manner of workmanship which they illustrate. In their only partial emergence into the larger spaces of actual objects these dead men and mourners belong to a strange region that is somehow in this world and yet not of it. Overtaken by the spell of their brooding and sombre attitudes and mood we may feel as if no other kind of imaging could impart the same sense of solemnity.

And yet it is gravity and repose that is the mood also of the very greatest of sculpture in the round. And standing before its most superb examples we may be tempted to declare that it is in these terms rather than in any other that the sculptor's art reaches its culmination. Occasionally among these may be found single figures or groups of which the effect is something other than that of sobriety or solemnity.

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But in the work of Egypt and of Greece, of France and of the great Italians, the rendering of human bodies in their complete three-dimensional solidity appears to entail the rendering likewise of the quality of overpowering quiet.

Of some importance, even in the appreciation of sculptured relief, is the distinction between work in which abstract design predominates to the point almost of destroying its realism, and work that is securely naturalistic. But it is for the judgment of modelling in the round that the issue between formalism and naturalism becomes most crucial. All art, we have found Rhys Carpenter declaring, must combine the divergent appeals of the abstract values of pure design and the values belonging to recognizable objects. The controversial matter is as to what proportioning of the two appeals is most commendable. It is perhaps difference of opinion, or of feeling, in this regard that is the main reason for the discrepant ratings of periods, of masters, and of masterpieces. According to our several estimates as to the proper balance between formalism and realism we shall find ourselves preferring the work of the sixth, fifth, or fourth century in Greece, of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth century in France.

There are, to be sure, instances—perhaps indeed they mark the pinnacle of this art—of which it would have to be said that neither aspect of the sculptural appeal is detrimental to the other. These are works in which abstract design in unadulterated purity pervades the recognizable shapes of the actual world; and in which in turn those shapes, without

loss of full reality, have miraculously acquired formal rhythms and symmetries. Many Egyptian statues would seem to belong in this class; and so would the superb figures of the Parthenon frieze, and such later masterpieces as Michelangelo's Madonna and Child in Florence, where the seated figure, without any distortion, conforms to the contours of an immense and beautiful cylinder.⁴ Highly simplified all these creations undoubtedly are, but the simplification in no case verges upon conventionalization or upon abstraction.

But there are those who desire a rendering yet more detailed, yet more suave and fluent, fuller of complexities of drapery and of flesh, with sinuous curves and lovely lines that make for a more exceeding ease and grace. These will incline away from the austere inventions of ancient Egypt, from the sublimities of Phidias, and from the great Buddhas, and will ask instead for Praxiteles, or Benvenuto—perhaps even for Bernini.

And of an opposite temper there will be others for whom the stark grandeur of Egyptian animal sculpture and the dignity of Chinese portrait-busts leave nothing in themselves to be desired, but who none the less crave also the very special and strange beauty belonging to work in which simplification is carried beyond what is needful, in which formalization exceeds its normal limits. These will search back through the later ages of French production till they reach the very early period with its triumphs of formalized carving, as in the sculpture of Chartres. And among the Greeks they will be content

⁴ See illustration 12.

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not even with Phidias, but will demand that they be given also the ineffable beauty of the Archaic. Those fluted draperies, that schematized hair, that wraith of a faint smile, those postures of transfixed immobility, all possess for such as are enamoured of them a power of irresistible enchantment. Bewitched by their spell one may easily declare that it is only when the formal rhythms of design thus overpass their permitted boundaries and transmute the very lineaments of the human face and form that sculpture finds its uttermost expression.⁵

But still other preferences there may be: for the exotic and bizarre allurements of the dancing figure of Siva; or for the half-morbid sweetness suffusing the creations of the Indo-Greek, as if they suffered from the union of two strains too alien for assimilation. Or again for the peculiar loveliness of that other work of mixed affiliations, the Hispano-Phoenician, and the head discovered at Elché with its faintly ruddy lips and unforgettable profile. Or it may be for such a miracle of carving as the mellifluous figure of Kuan-Yin, poised on a lotus flower with upraised hand and expression of infinite graciousness. Or finally for some masterpiece of anonymous Egyptian workmanship—for that most entrancing of portrait-busts, the head of Nefertete the incomparable.⁶

But there is no need for controversy, or for any coercions of persuasion, for in the many mansions of this art of chiselled marble is provision for all who come.

⁵ See illustrations 26 and 27.

⁶ See illustrations 28 and 29.

CHAPTER VII

PROSE AND POETRY

THERE appear to be two languages and only two, prose and poetry, the languages of disputation and of song, of sobriety and of delirium. But distinct and clear though these moods might seem to be, the two arts to which they belong trouble us with a problem which arises in the case of no other forms of artistic utterance. They leave us doubtful of where their boundaries lie, and strangely puzzled as to how there can intervene between them so baffling a no man's land to be claimed with equal right by each. Shall we say that we are confronted with prose or with poetry when we read:

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?

When the morning stars sang together . . .

Or who shut up the sea with doors . . .

When I made the cloud the garment thereof . . .

And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further . . .

Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail . . .

Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? . . .

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Canst thou bind the sweet influence of the Pleiades, or
loose the bands of Orion?

Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst
thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

And to what category rightfully belong such lines as these:

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the
night,

I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving.

.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,
And for love, sweet love—but praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

If we call the first of these passages prose it is a prose sonorous with powerful rhythms like those of verse, and impassioned, and full of imagery; and if the second is poetry it is of a kind that would seem to have broken with all the traditions and laws of the species. John Livingston Lowes places in juxtaposition these quotations from the prose of Meredith and the poetry of H. D.:

Her face was like the after-sunset
Across a rose-garden,
With the
Wings of an eagle
Poised outspread on the light.

.

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The light of her face falls from its flower,
as a hyacinth,
hidden in a far valley,
perishes upon burnt grass.

Now let both passages be written down as ordinary prose, thus:

Her face was like the after-sunset across a rose-garden,
with the wings of an eagle poised outspread on the light.

The light of her face falls from its flower, as a hyacinth,
hidden in a far valley, perishes upon burnt grass.

To a large degree the suggestion that they might be called poetry has vanished; yet the sound and the sense are unaltered, and if either was a poem before it remains so still. The only change that has occurred is one of visual appearance: not sound, not sense, but shape—a mere matter of spacing. But how strange a criterion by which to judge between the two great classes of literary art! Can the distinction between poetry and prose rest in any wise upon an issue seemingly so irrelevant as the spatial configuration of the symbols through which their meanings are conveyed? And, if so, may not that distinction be after all a vicious one, and better abandoned?

It is of course for more fundamental reasons than their dissimilar effect upon the eye that these two essentially spaceless forms of art are recognized; but since the visual appeal of written speech is by no means unimportant in the appreciation of literature something further may be said about it.

Originally, artistic speech was of the nature of song, and

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appreciated entirely through hearing. Much of it remains song and should be actually listened to, or in the silent reading of it images of sound should be allowed to supervene and fill the silence with remembered music. The gradual replacement of reading of words from the written page for the hearing of them chanted is perhaps on the whole to be regretted. And yet there are a few compensations. Some of these are in the way of definite visual aids to an increased realization of rhythms. The exquisite cinquain, a stanza extensively used by Adelaide Crapsey, is undeniably appreciated more fully when it is seen as well as heard:

Still as
On windless nights
The moon-cast shadows are,
So still will be my heart when I
Am dead.¹

Each successive line contains one foot more than the preceding, until the last, which returns to the single foot again; and the movement is of a wave constantly swelling, gaining momentum until it breaks and subsides into silence. And in all other cases of unusual stanza forms where rhyme-scheme and number and length of the lines cannot be easily anticipated, their appearances on the page—their shape and size and the indentations of the edges—assist in the regulation of attention and in the control of pauses and breathing.

Then there are the various subtleties of meaning and value

¹ Reprinted from *Verses* by Adelaide Crapsey with permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

—overtones of words that depend merely on how they are written. *Ghost*, it has been observed, could scarcely possess the same suggestion of evil omen and strangeness were it not for the silent *h* which is also the initial letter of *haunt* and *horror*. There are delicate shades of meaning to be apprehended by the eye in skilful employment of capitalization and punctuation. Effects of irony, devoutness, or blasphemy, of exuberance or restraint, may be mediated by so simple a matter as use or omission of a capital letter. Asterisks, dashes, parentheses and dots may be full of insinuations incapable of translation into words. The employment or withholding of the sign for a question imparts shades of distinction incommunicable in any other way; and variations in the use of quotation marks often carry all the import of visible gestures.

But all this leads us away from our original problem of the proper demarcation of prose and verse. And to that we must return.

Now, as in most situations where the clean-cut categories of reason are given added semblance of reality through the familiarity of their names, the actual state of the case is no simple one of merely two kinds of verbal utterance, completely alien in substance, form, and spirit. They are not two things, incapable of degrees or forever debarred from partial trespassing upon each other's domains. Rather we find them to be forms of expression of an incredible range of variation as to emotional intensity, imaginative content, and sheer musical quality. It is only the extreme cases of each that stand opposed as almost completely diverse in intention and effect.

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There may be found instances of poetry in which the meaning will be nearly drowned out in the hypnotic pulse of the syllables—in which awareness of the things spoken of will be almost submerged in the flood of simple sensuous response to tone and movement. In the reading of:

When, with flame all around him aspirant,
 Stood flushed, as a harp-player stands,
The implacable beautiful tyrant,
 Rose-crowned, having death in his hands;
And a sound as the sound of loud water
 Smote far through the flight of the fires,
And mixed with the lightning of slaughter
 A thunder of lyres,

we are rendered incapable of full rational attention to what is said. The experience approximates to that of listening to a Wagnerian overture. On the other hand in such prose as this:

I have offered measures not men, and the change of two or three men only is not a sufficient pledge to me that measures will be changed,

the intellectual appeal almost completely crowds out any possible sense of the sound or cadence of the words through which the meaning is imparted.

Much prose is written and read with no consideration whatsoever for possible imaginative or musical appeal; and there are at least some contexts in which such an appeal would be ridiculously out of place. But not many. Cook-books, timetables, laboratory instructions, weather reports, financial

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news, and almanacs may properly dispense with any ideal except that of clarity and conciseness. They are not literature—not even prose, except in the obvious sense that they certainly are not poetry. But no more, alas, may be said of most of the utterance poured out these days in an appalling stream from the printing presses of the world: daily newspapers, weekly journals, monthlies, quarterlies, and bound volumes. And yet, despite the primary importance of fact or of theory in treatises upon history, science, art, sociology, psychology, economics, and philosophy, and in news summaries, editorial comment, and religious or political exhortation, none of these works is really free from motives of persuasion, all of them actually harbour the unadmitted design of appealing to the emotions. All, consequently, are under a kind of obligation to employ the devices of art. And happily in all fields of intellectual endeavour some examples are always occurring of writing that can be called literature. Lincoln's speeches, of course, were that, and Schopenhauer's writings in philosophy. And recently Karl Snyder's *World Machine* and Eddington's *Stars and Atoms*. Sometimes even, without meaning to, a piece of writing as unlikely as a weather report may arouse some of the vague excitement proper to the reading of a passage of poetry. Take such items as these:

Low pressure prevails west of the Rocky Mountains, in Idaho and south of the Columbia River as far as Nevada. Hurricane conditions continue along the Mississippi Valley and into the Gulf of Mexico. Blizzards are reported in North Dakota and Wyoming, snow and hail in Oregon and zero

temperature in Missouri. High winds are blowing southeastward from the West Indies and shipping along the coast of Brazil has received warning of the approach of a tornado.

It would not make much difference in what order the words occurred. It is enough simply that they do occur. Many passages in Milton and in the Bible depend similarly for their magnificence upon names of places and names descriptive of states of the elements; as witness:

Abhorred Styx the flood of deadly hate,
 Sad Acheron of Sorrow, black and deep;
 Cocytus, nam'd of lamentation loud
 . . . fierce Phlegeton
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
 Far off from these a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe the River of Oblivion rouses. . . .
 . . . Beyond this flood a frozen Continent
 Lies dark and wilde, beat with perpetual storms
 Of Whirlwind and dire Hail. . . .

But besides the words for distant lands and waters and for the changes of the heavens there are multitudes of others, high-sounding, and of such imaginative import that simply to use them ensures a large effect. For words after all do not drop from heaven; they are man-made—the precipitates of myriads of intense experiences. Many of them, as Carlyle declared, are fossil poetry; and they stand ready for use, part of the rich natural inheritance of all who are endowed with organs of speech. Many of them present themselves as seemingly part of the great volume of sensuous qualities with

which the world abounds. Consider that passage drenched with magic:

A savage place as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover.

Can we say that Coleridge is to be more than half credited with its beauty, appropriating as he did and crowding into so narrow a space words of such distinction: *savage, holy, enchanted, waning moon, haunted, wailing, demon and lover*? Or take another instance:

. . . magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.

Keats needed here no accessory adornment of rhythm. The words in their nakedness would have been enough.

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell

as he himself goes on to say, testifying to an intense awareness of words as bright and beautiful objects to be gazed upon and handled and hoarded like treasures. Havelock Ellis declares that "the artist in speech moves among words rather than among things." Certainly our language includes much that deserves this lofty esteem. *Reverie, sublunar, desolate, twilight, mournful, sombre, foreboding, fabulous, bourne, dominion, abysmal, myrmidon, woful, bleak, murmurous, nostalgia, nevermore, dreamy, ambrosial, brooding, omen*, are among them; and not a great deal needs to be done to weave from them the fabric of poetry. It might seem indeed that choice of words like these constitutes one of the impor-

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tant differences between utterance that is poetry and utterance that is mere prose. And yet any such attempted distinction turns out at once to be fallacious. For there are no words that can be named that do not appear—and sometimes in great abundance—in descriptive prose; in writing impassioned, full of images, and yet prose.

There is no content really that is the exclusive property of poets. The magical things of the world are common possessions: stars and flowers, dawn and sunset, water and fire, hills and woods and the sea. It is for this reason that all the expressive and colourful language by which the qualities and aspects of these things may be imparted belongs to poetry and prose alike. Furthermore, it is not necessarily the glamorous and exotic words that must be chosen for the making even of a poem. For the production of some of the very greatest effects there has been no need of words that beguile the ear and dazzle the eye by their radiance. We do not have to read far in the pages of poetry to encounter the idiom of ordinary speech with its flavour of things familiar and intimately cherished. For many poets this practice is the rule rather than the exception; and all masters achieve it sometimes. Practically, if not quite, it is the language of every-day that we read in

Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars,

and in

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health and quiet breathing.

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Rather especially simple is the language of most great lamentation, for simplicity seems to be called for to express, without hint of insincerity, the mood of passionate regret. This simplicity is likely to come through the large use of monosyllables, and of words devoid of sensuous richness and colour, unsuggestive of things and places, sights, and sounds alien to common experience. We find it in

There a very little girth
Shall hold round what once the earth
Seemed too narrow to contain.

And in the solemnity of

And slow howe'er my marches be
I shall at length sit down by thee.

And in

Oh, there will pass with your great passing
Little of beauty not your own,—
Only the light of common water,
Only the grace of simple stone.²

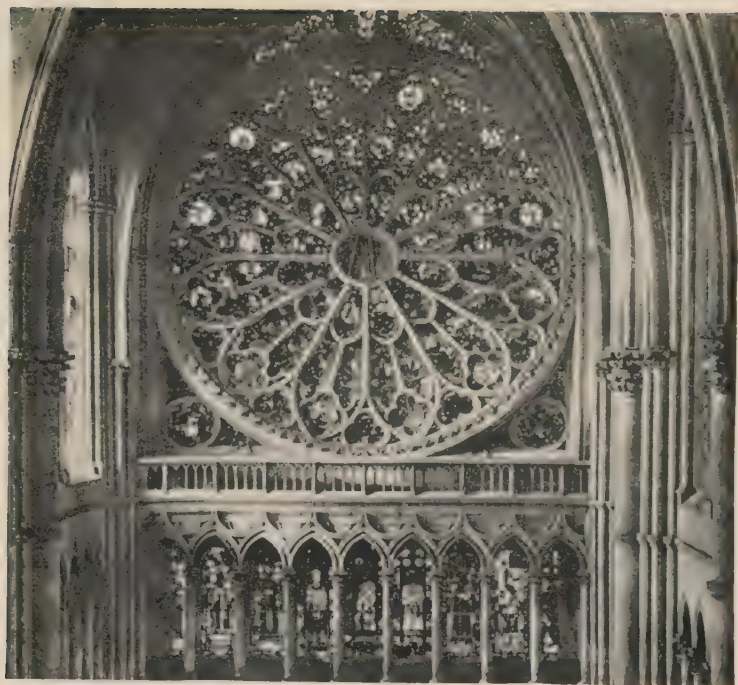
How very different from the language of these other passages:

He must not flote upon his watry bear
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.

or

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
A Love in desolation masked;—a Power

² From *Second April*, published by Harper and Brothers; copyright 1921 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.





Photograph by the Metropolitan Museum

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Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;

or

For always thee the fervid languid glories
Allured of heavier suns in mightier skies;
Thine ears knew all the wandering watery sighs
Where the sea sobs round Lesbian promontories.

And yet these passages are from *Lycidas*, *Adonais*, and *Ave atque Vale*—all purporting to be laments, and ranking high among the great elegies of the world. But the greatness of none of them consists after all in the revelation of deep personal grief. It is greatness of another sort: expression of a melancholy detached, aloof, dehumanized—such feeling as is possible to an artist more enamoured of words than of other human beings, and so dazzled by the music and cadence of syllables that ordinary mortal passions fall away like a rotting garment. They give expression to a kind of seraphic experience. But the distinction here suggested between different sorts of poetry is a matter of degree rather than of fundamentally distinct kinds. For successful articulation of even the most intense emotion is possible only to the extent that consciousness of words for their own sake supplants, at least somewhat, consciousness of the occasions for their use. And correspondingly it would be only by a kind of accident that an assemblage of words unprovoked by vivid feeling could eventuate in great poetry.

And as to differences between words themselves, at least as important as the question of their commonness or length

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or sonorousness is another characteristic by which they are to be distinguished. In fact, many of the words already cited for the significance of their tonal and rhythmic qualities are quite as notable for the further attribute of rich expressiveness. Words differ profoundly in their burden of concentrated meaning, in the detailed concreteness of their implication. Those immediately productive of images of movement, of colour, and of shape are marked off sharply from words neutral, grey, unspecific. And like scions of heroic lineage as contrasted with unknown *parvenus*, one sort of word—the sort appropriate for art—is invested with the garment of inherited glory from the splendour of its pedigree and of its past associations. The verbs *to be*, *to have*, *to do*, *to go*, *to move*, *to make*, *to speak* are among the unvivid words; as are nouns like *object*, *idea*, *motion*; and adjectives *small*, *big*, *new*, and the like. What for imaginative, for literary, effect we need always to be told is the particular kind of being, having, making, moving, doing, that is in question—the particular kind of largeness or newness or antiquity. This of course could be supplied by additional modifying epithets. A succession of adjectives or of adverbs may help to fill in the gaps of an inexpressive noun or verb, imparting life and individuality to expressions vaguely indicative of particular things and events. But nearly without exception it turns out that if one word can perform the function of two it is to be preferred. How specific and effective are the words *limp*, *lag*, *flutter*, *sag*, *bloated*, *bulge*, *quiver*, *glower*, *snarl*, *jagged*, *sneer*, *wheeze*, *verdant*, *opaque*, *limpid*. They do what we

crave—elicit swiftly, without hesitation or waste, the clearest possible image.

But once again we find ourselves deprived of a seemingly hopeful basis of distinction between prose and poetry. For specificity, condensation, vividness, are as much demanded for the one as for the other. Words pregnant, imageful, and detailed are the words of the artist, whether he be writing in stanzas or in paragraphs. Spencer's entire theory of prose style reduces to the demand for economy of attention; and this in the last analysis is primarily to be achieved through proper choice of words, though also, as he demonstrates, through their proper ordering. But neither the kind of words selected nor their temporal sequence can possibly serve for the demarcation of the two allegedly distinct domains of verbal expression.

But no more, as we have noted, may prose and poetry be distinguished in the matter of topics. The inanimate world, and the world of other persons, and all the vicissitudes of existence, belong to both alike. Love, death, friendship, regret, youth, age, dread, pain, ambition, joy, desire, ennui, may be treated by them both. If, then, it is by reason neither of diversity of language nor difference of subject-matter that the traditional separation of these two *genres* is to be explained, it would seem that their formal differences only could be adduced to account for it. And we have already seen that it is indeed true that certain definite peculiarities of this kind are detectable. For one thing rhyme is an adornment completely absent in prose—its chance occurrence constitut-

ing in fact a blemish. Rhyme is a variety of repetition exemplified exclusively in poetry; and yet even there it is not always present. There are unrhymed lines not only in most ballads but also in many more formal types of stanza; and it is only by the rarest exception that rhyme occurs in the iambic pentameter of drama and epic. None the less, in the true lyric, rhyme is an accessory not only most often present, but almost necessarily so, for the procuring of fullest musical effect. In free-verse forms it is lacking, but its absence is less acutely felt because of the many other accompanying irregularities.

As for the other kinds of rhythmic repetition by which poetry is characterized: abundance of alliteration, of assonance, of refrain, and approximate regularity of beat—all but the last are discoverable in prose as well, although to be sure less insistently and profusely. Sparingly used there is scarcely any device so effectual as alliteration for knitting together related ideas or for emphasizing their contrast. The prevalence of alliterative form for aphoristic sayings exemplifies this. *Do or die, kith and kin, make or mar, safe and sound, have and hold, sink or swim, watch and wait*, would lose most of their pithiness if deprived of the repeated letters. Stevenson gives illuminating instances of the dominance of certain letters in many prose passages, and suggests that an unconscious craving for the return of some antecedent sound is what frequently constrains the writer of prose in his desperate search for a different word from that first occurring to him. But alliteration and refrain as well are relatively

infrequent in prose, and when they do occur they undeniably tend to induce some of the specific effect of poetry. And finally, as we have already noted, although good prose is rhythmic, its rhythms are different from those of verse—far freer, far less regularly recurrent. Even those remarkable rhythms of Sir Thomas Browne's most famous passage are rhythms of prose rather than of poetry:

Now since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of *Methuselah*, and in a yard underground, and thin walls of clay, outworn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and tramplings of three conquests; . . . Time which antiquates Antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these *minor* Monuments.

And yet it is a difference of degree not kind that obtains between these cadences and those of the freest blank verse. Indeed, in any absolute sense all suggested possible distinctions between the two domains, including the purely formal ones, would seem to have failed us. Even the impossibility of rhyme in prose is at best but a negative criterion, its presence being not invariably to be counted on in poetry.

There is another criterion, however, which might prove more significant than any yet mentioned, for the demarcation of the two modes of expression. This has to do with their unlike structural units. Whatever the intellectual content verse may possess, or however melodious and emotional prose may succeed in being, the unit of the one is metrical—a matter of pulse and sound and movement shaped into line and

stanza; that of the other is propositional—an affirmation or denial: in a word, the sentence. Take a passage so pervaded with beauty as this of Conrad:

And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.³

Even here it is sentences—miraculous carved shapes, no two alike, variously coloured and shadowed, unique each in its contour and texture—that we encounter. Single words we inherit; in appropriating them none may make claim to the function of the craftsman. But for the writer of prose the sentence is his little kingdom. Not indeed upon single sentences but upon their sequence depends the full literary effect; yet what is done with them one by one determines in the end the mysterious attribute of style.

It is deeply significant therefore that when we turn from

³ With acknowledgments to the Conrad estate and to the publishers, Doubleday, Doran and Company.

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prose to poetry we find that the sentence as an object of attention has disappeared. Read:

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

Or again:

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
And all the season of snows and sins;
The days dividing lover and lover,
The light that loses, the night that wins;
And time remembered is grief forgotten,
And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
And in green underwood and cover
Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

Whatever else this submergence of the grammatical within an essentially musical structure connotes, we might be tempted to say that at least it means a shift from a primarily intellectual motivation to one primarily emotional. But this is not altogether accurate, nor quite sufficient. Something else we might say which would have perhaps no more than the truth of metaphor—but the difference in question is too elusive to be indicated in any completely logical way. The difference between prose and poetry is the difference between the speaking voice and the singing—two things qualitatively distinct, and yet incapable of exact description. But though

distinct, they comprehend a wide range of gradations that intervene between them. The speaking voice as it rises into singing passes through an intermediate region which is that of impassioned declamation. Here the structural unit is not unambiguously that of either prose or poetry. It is the sentence, but one that threatens momentarily to lose itself in the tyrannous cadences of poetical rhythm: or it is foot or line, but one that threatens momentarily to lose itself in the less trammelled gait of propositional discourse. And just as prose is the domain of speech, and poetry that of song, so this place between might be called the no man's land where belong the freer forms of verse and the more lyrical sorts of prose. It would be here that we should locate the two passages with which we opened from Job and Walt Whitman; and Sir Walter Raleigh belongs here, and Sir Thomas Browne, and many others.

Now it is not of course to be implied that poetry should be literally sung. In fact, the musical quality intrinsic in poetry is most frequently spoiled when its words are set to actual music. Furthermore it must be remembered that no claim is here made for merely three levels of utterance distinctly marked off from one another. There would be room for difference of opinion, moreover, as to precisely where, with regard to different types of voices, any particular example of verbal expression should be located. But at least in multitudes of cases there could be no ground for such dispute. There are passages—and some have been cited—for which the inner silent voice of the reader is undeniably lifted—

changed from the soberer quality of plain speech into the voice of singing—with the keen wail of pain, the quickened breathing of terror, the throaty utterance of passion, the moan of desolation, or the breathless cry of sheer ecstasy.

Without further concerning ourselves with the demarcation of prose and verse we must now turn to what may be regarded as the essence of imaginative expression irrespective of whether it assumes the guise of impassioned prose or that of actual poetry. This is the poetic figure and, more especially, metaphor.

Now, figures of speech, both momentary and sustained, may be garnered from the imaginative prose writing of all the ages.

Venus, like a choice jewel set low in the hem in the sky, is no different in effect from a figure imbedded in poetry. And when again Conrad writes:

And this stillness of life did not in the least resemble a peace. It was the stillness of an implacable force brooding over an inscrutable intention,

this is great and imaginative speech—metaphor of the highest order. The same is true of this sentence of Proust's:

Custom came to take me in her arms, carried me all the way up to my bed, and laid me down there like a little child.

Or of this:

. . . the fascination of my book, a magic as potent as the deepest slumber, had stopped my enchanted ears and had

obliterated the sound of that golden bell from the azure surface of the enveloping silence.

Or of Pater's expression:

. . . tasting the sunless pleasures of weary people.

Or Meredith's characterization of a man as having

. . . a look superior to simple strength and grace; the look of a great sky-bird about to mount.

But it is not merely that similes and metaphors are more profuse in poetry. They seem there to find their most adequate expression. It will therefore be from poetry that we shall exemplify the several types of metaphorical utterance. To say that it is to metaphor that the very content of poetry is reducible would be not quite accurate; but very nearly so. Certainly the quintessence of poetry—the pure grain of it that is left when all chaff has been winnowed away, the unalloyed gold that constitutes its substance—is little else than metaphor. Whether sustained for a verse or a stanza, or, as allegory, for an entire narrative, metaphorical speech is poetic speech, the fullest flowering of imaginative conceiving. For all metaphor is but the assertion of what, absurd for cold reason and common sense, is yet possessed of the profoundest truth for feeling. It is the grafting of the attributes of space and time upon the undimensional and timeless, of motion upon the motionless, of sound upon the soundless. In it we witness the impinging of the spatiality of colour upon the spacelessness of odours; the assimilation of the corporeality

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of solid shape to the incorporeality of sound; the merging of the non-sensuous into the sensuous richness of the palpable and the visible; the transition from the warm immediacy and concreteness of the world of sense to the clear cold air of pure intellection.

Of these several forms of imaginative comparison the simplest involves merely a movement within the boundaries of some single domain. This may bring together things or ideas having no ordinary resemblance to one another and yet not separated by the gulf that intervenes between the visible and the audible, or the visible and the utterly abstract.

Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang
is beautifully imaginative; but the comparison is between two things belonging to the one category of the visible.

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players

is a comparison of the same unadventurous kind.

A more extended flight of the imagination occurs in the slipping of an element into some sensory domain other than its own, with a consequent acquiring of a flavour or fragrance, a brightness or shape foreign to its original essence. This is what we find in

Heavy with bees, a sunny sound.

In:

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers, fragrant-eyed.

In:

Clear, silver, icy, keen awakening tones.

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In:

Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes.

And in:

The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn.

It is a figure belonging to this class that Emily Dickinson has in her stanza:

There's a certain slant of light
On winter afternoons
That oppresses like the weight
Of cathedral tunes.

A still more important kind of transition than that from one domain of sense to another is effected when the movement is from the imageless realm of mind and spirit into the vivid world of sensory qualities. This attribution to things invisible, intangible and spaceless, of characteristics drawn from the things of time and space, constitutes a large proportion of poetic figures. Notable in this class are such lines as

And seal the hushèd casket of my soul.

.

Bright shoots of everlastingness.

.

Some shadows of eternity.

.

No, she is athirst and drinking up her wonder.

.

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The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
Of corpses to a death-bird after battle.

.

Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn
Indicative that suns go down.

And these great metaphors and similes:

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration.

.

By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-filled bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;

.

Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life.

.

Cool fingers of oblivion on
Thine eyes and close them for
Eternity.

.

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of Silence and slow Time.

.

And if I drink oblivion of a day
So shorten I the stature of my soul.

Most momentous of all types of metaphor is the reversal of
what we find in the foregoing, and instead of things abstract

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being suddenly endowed with sensory qualities, it is the sensory world of inanimate objects that is lifted into the mysterious recesses of the invisible kingdom of consciousness. All personifications belong in this category:

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.

.

but my wings were faint
With the delight of a remembered dream,
As are the noon-tide plumes of summer winds
Sate with sweet flowers.

.

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores.

.

When I behold upon the night's starr'd face
Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance.

Such passages as all of these are merely a few especially exquisite fragments chipped out from a deposit of poetic thought piled high through the ages. What, then, of the rest? Should one treat poetry after this fashion, as if it consisted of separable beads of amethyst or emerald or pearl, to be torn from the string and held up dazzlingly to the light? What of poetry of larger span—not single drops and ripples and waves of it, but the full river in all its magnificence?

We have considered elsewhere Poe's dictum that a poem must be short. This is what more fully he says on the matter:

. . . a poem is such, only inasmuch as it intensely excites, by elevating, the soul; and all intense excitements are, through a psychical necessity, brief. For this reason, at least

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one half of the "Paradise Lost" is essentially prose—a succession of poetical excitements interspersed, *inevitably*, with corresponding depressions. . . .

Now the same, if we are scrupulous, we should have to say of many other lengthy works. Or if we do not call the ore in which the pure gold is imbedded exactly prose, at least it is poetry of another, a lower, order. Shelley performed an amazing feat of sustained rhapsody in his *Prometheus*; and there are other comparable cases. *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest*, *Hamlet*—a great company of them—are pervaded with poetry; yet we need to make a distinction between their wide plateaus of exalted speech and the illuminated mountain peaks of lines like

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

And besides Elizabethan drama there are all the notable narratives written in metre which offer us the same spectacle of mingled poetry and the not quite poetry: Browning's dramatic pieces, and Swinburne's *Tristram*, and Tennyson's *Idylls*; Edgar Lee Masters' *Domesday Book*, and Amy Lowell's versified tales, and those of Masefield.

But it was poetry in its pure essence that we undertook to consider: poetry as the rarefied precipitate of the finest imagining when, in the frost and fire of deep experience, it achieves the ultimate distillation of joy or pathos. This kind and height of poetical expression is what all poets and all

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lovers of poetry have had in mind in their supreme characterizations of this art of verbal music, as when calling it

the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge . . . the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science.

It was poetry of this supreme kind that Shelley meant when he wrote

Poetry . . . makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world. . . . Poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man.

And when he declared

All high poetry is infinite . . . veil after veil may be withdrawn, and the inmost naked beauty never exposed.

The finest poetry appears always the most effortless, the most inevitable, and yet it suggests also an immense volume of experience that went to its conceiving. It emerges into the light of day like the tapering peak of an enormous iceberg submerged in profound and mysterious waters. Appearing as if unborn in pain and labour, it yet permits us to sense the myriads of pangs, the uncountable raptures, by which the spirit of man must have been overtaken for the final fruition in articulate ecstasy. Of all this and more we may get intimations from every great lyric. We get it to perfection in a poem of Blake's which for limpid beauty stands almost solitary:

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
Through the clear windows of the morning, turn

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Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell one another, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth,
And let thy holy feet visit our clime!

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumèd garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our lovesick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languished head,
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee!

CHAPTER VIII

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ALL arts, as Pater wisely said, have in some sense their goal in music. But to lift architecture out of its more natural companionship with painting and sculpture and couple it with the art the most impalpable, most ethereal, is to suggest that in a very special and profound way architecture presses toward that goal. It is to suggest even that in its turn the "baseless fabric . . . the insubstantial pageant" of music partakes of the form or the inner essence of that art, solid and earthly, of the "cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples" with which man strives to embody his yearning for the substantial and the permanent.

But if they be indeed thus strangely akin, it is at first glance their difference that appears to overshadow any likeness they may possess. Architecture is of all arts the most concerned with space, even to the point of seeming to be its prime revealer. In the words of Geoffrey Scott:

it uses space as a material and sets us in the midst. . . . The architect models in space as a sculptor in clay.

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For Schopenhauer, as we have seen, it is the conflict between gravity and rigidity that is the sole aesthetic material of architecture. Pure voluminousness and pure materiality with its significant properties of weight and cohesion are, then, what this art presents us with. But music is devoid of spatial implications of any kind. Utterly spaceless, it is, as it were, the essence of time—as much the revealer of time as architecture is of spatiality. Space is motionless; time a kind of motion. Only whereas the movement suggested by time's passage is to be expressed by the figure of a steady onward current, the movement incorporated in music is of the nature of vortices—a swirling, circular motion sweeping forward but forever halting and turning back again toward its starting-place. Vast whirlpools are what we witness in a medium intangible, invisible, and manifested to the ear alone.

A further difference, and one linked with the contrasted spatial and temporal characters of the two arts, is their unlike degree of permanence. In one sense music is as lasting as its written record, or as the memory of it transmitted from generation to generation. But in another sense, for most individuals to whom as listeners the pulses of it come one by one, with tragic haste destroying what they supplant, the experience of music is the experience of the most vanishing thing that any artist ever has contrived. Each phase of it seems more evanescent than a perfume, more fragile than the first premonition of morning. On the other hand architecture, by reason of its mass, its weight, and its immense conquest of gravity, appears to be the thing above all others

destined to endure. Not the Egyptians only but the makers of all the great cathedrals and fortresses and castles, of all tombs and places of captivity, must in the moment of building have harboured the delusion that what they laboured upon was fitted to outlast all other works of men. Whatever we may now know to the contrary, all these works affect us as indeed a kind of incarnation of the very principle of the perdurable.

And lastly, in the matter of practical import, architecture and music appear to stand in almost utter contrast as being, one a sheer luxury, the other a necessity. In its beginnings music was, to be sure, assimilated to the activities of its makers in the sense that it served as inciter to battle and as an aid in fending off hostile spirits and propitiating benevolent. It set, moreover, the pace for the erotic dance, and helped to celebrate prosperity and to mourn disaster. And even today it is music that best of all the arts can instil bravery in the soldier, magnify the religious excitement of the worshipper, and exalt the grief of the mourner. Aeons before Shakespeare it was known to be the food of love. There is no passion which it may not foster, no use, wherever emotion enters, to which it may not be put. Yet even in view of all this it may still be said that music is a luxury—a superfluous, albeit beatific, indulgence—and so intimately bound up with the very meaning of ecstatic experience that the only fitting image ever devised for the representation of Paradise has been in its terms.

On the other hand architecture, more than any other art,

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has from its origination been grounded in practical needs. It had its humble beginning in the requirement for shelter; and however far the distance between a rude hut offering protection from the elements and the miracle of a cathedral, it is the same uses that are subserved by them both. Each has always met that need, urgent beyond most others, of shutting out menacing evils and shutting in all good. Whether the evil was rain and wind and frost; or wild beasts, hosts of the enemy and spirits of demons, the builder has supplied forms of protection against them all. Homes and shrines he has offered, fortresses and places of healing and consolation. And his beneficent structures have always entered intimately into the life of the nations, standing as almost perfect objective expressions of the varied social needs to which changing civilizations give rise.

But architecture and music are not in all respects divergent: they are also united by a number of strong bonds of likeness. And first of all they stand together, removed from all other forms of imaginative expression in their indifference to the natural world, their utter independence of the things and events which are the unceasing concern of the other arts. There seem to be no models, or even remote analogies, in nature of the constructions either of the architect or of the composer. Are these, we then may ask, entirely devoid of representative character?

The view that architecture, like painting and sculpture, is an imitative art has been ingeniously defended by Rhys

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Carpenter, and his observations merit serious attention. For it is no ordinary theory of imitation that he puts forward. Painting, he says,

has the seen world to draw upon; it does not have to create and establish its trees, rocks, streams, meadows, and animals, or waste any effort in persuading us that they are things which we already know. But architecture has to invent its world of objects first, before it can use them.

And these recognizable architectural objects are just those elements of a building which recur in every new type of structure that can possibly be devised: doors and windows, arches and domes, stairs and galleries and all the other familiar parts. Because they are so familiar and also so well adapted to their use they come to seem actually necessary and natural elements of the world. "A column seems to be a column almost as a dog is a dog or a tree is a tree." The difference is that, whereas trees and dogs owe their existence not at all to human contrivance, columns do, and so with the other architectural inventions.

This theory of Carpenter's thus combines the suggestions that while later architects were of all types of artists the most slavish, the pioneers in the art were astonishingly original.

Now, it is in fact clear that only a limited range of variation is possible in the size, shape, or proportions of the accepted elements of a building. Not very much may a column be broadened or shortened and still be a column rather than a mere block of stone. Windows and doors can be lowered or narrowed only so far and no further, on pain of becoming

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mere gaps in a wall, without purpose. Thus the view that all but the earliest architects have been held within very restricted bounds in the pursuit of their calling appears highly plausible. But that their predecessors were similarly hampered might at first sight seem true also. For architecture above all other arts appears to suffer from the coercions of practical necessity and of human idiosyncrasies. More needfully than anything else in the world, a building must possess assured stability to withstand the onslaught of wind and the levelling effect of the force of gravity. It must be so constructed as to shut out storm and admit sunshine. It must be lofty enough to provide air to breathe, extensive enough to allow free movement within it. The very size of the human body and its various physiological requirements seem to determine and control in a myriad of ways architectural design and construction. Considerable interpretation of the art has been designed to emphasize just these factors making for its supposed limitation. It is just such interpretation that Carpenter deplores and rejects. It was deplored likewise by Geoffrey Scott, who listed what he called the "mechanical fallacy" as one of his four fallacies of architectural criticism.

And all such objection to the view that the art of building is primarily the outcome of utilitarian demands would seem indeed to be well grounded. For surely it is clear that no mere demand for a roof could have originated the dome of St. Peter's, or the vaulted heights of Amiens; no simple perceived utility of doors could alone have produced the solemn entrance provided by the portals of any great cathedral.

Though there is practical need for a means of passage from a lower to a higher level, this cannot in itself be said to have given birth to the rhythmic ascending spiral of the winding stone stairway of a French château; nor could the sheer necessity for admission of light have invented the splendour of a rose window or of such glorious clusters of slender glass as transfigure the Sainte-Chapelle. Even the very insistent demand for stability, with its diversified requirements for reinforcing of the walls and supporting of galleries and roof, cannot receive all the credit for the devising of flying buttresses and for the elaborations of capitated pillars and groined vaulting. Not the examples set in the natural world nor yet the urgent necessities of man's life originated these things, but his creative imagination, responding to coercions which might have rendered him fumblingly impotent, but which provoked him instead to magnificent invention.¹

Still less is music to be explained in terms of the forces and events encountered in ordinary experience. A desperate and feeble case is sometimes made out for the imitative character of this art by reference to passages in modern compositions and even in the classics which suggest certain resemblances to sounds in nature. But the attempt thus to reduce music to the status of a representative art is woefully misguided. Near the opening of the fourth movement of Brahms' First Symphony occurs an internal quickening of the tempo, an increasing tide of sound in a *tremolo* passage in the strings. It is like the rising of wind, portentous, full

¹ See illustrations 30 and 31.

of omens of an approaching hurricane. It checks the breath, quickens the heart, in an emotion of mingled alarm and exaltation. But it is no ordinary or earthly wind that we hear. The only wind which could have been for this passage its great original would have been such as blew, unheard by man, in the primeval days of the earth's gestation.

The fire music of the *Valkyrie* may, to those who know its name and its context in the drama of Nordic gods and heroes, suggest the movement and the crackle and the roar of swift and devouring flames. But not of the flames ever encountered on any of the myriad occasions of man's earthly existence when fire manifests its terrible beauty and violence. It could be the fire alone of the deep recesses of newly conceived planets; of comets, whirling in their courses through interstellar space; of suns in shattering collision.

And the vast choral music of Bach's *Magnificat* is as the sound of many waters, with all the strength of spring torrents, of waterfalls precipitated out of high mountains, of the unbending tides and pervasive commotion of the sea. But no waters ever heard by mortal ear are the just analogue of that tremendous outpouring of exalted music. With nothing less could it be compared than the tumult of the cosmic scene when *darkness was upon the face of the deep*, and a firmament was generated in the midst of the waters *and the waters were gathered together in one place*.

It is intimations only, grandiose and vague, of the sounding of strange forces, of the clash of the elements, of "light that never was on sea or land," that music gives. The only

landscape that it can be said to offer is one to be apprehended, not by the eye of the body but through the inner all-comprehending vision of the spirit.

If, then, music can be called imitative it is after a manner vastly different from the imitativeness of painting, of sculpture, or even of poetry. Music is the etherealized, the disembodied rendering, not of this or that particular thing or event, but of all movements and sounds appertaining to a thousand objects, ranging all the way from the vague stirrings of elemental forces, through the tremors and cries of joy and lamentation of the brute world and the human, to premonitions of the angelic and the demonic. How false and foolish, then, to force its utterances into the limited category of "A Rivulet" or "A Thunderstorm"! Streams and storms and winged insects when experienced for themselves may open doors for the ranging of the imagination into regions wide and far. But when a fragment of melody is called by any of their names those doors clang shut. A process of too explicit identification is set up, and emotion is checked. In calling a musical invention "A Butterfly," an analogy is suggested with only one out of a myriad of relevant objects, with a consequent loss of an untold wealth of exquisite qualities—of floating clouds, and streaming mist, and the ripple and flow of waters, the flutter of garments, and the bowing of long grasses fingered by the wind.

Between the mere sounding quality of musical notes as given by the different instruments of the orchestra and sounds in nature there are, as De Witt Parker notes, "remote analo-

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gies . . . whether the musician wills them or not." More particularly the element of toneless noise which is an attribute of sounding strings, plucked or bowed, and wind instruments—of the French horn in particular—is suggestive of sounds in the inanimate world, and of the voices of beast and man. Since it must be always by the medium of some instrument that music is communicated to the ear there will be thus invariably super-added to its intrinsic appeal these borrowed reverberations from the natural world.

There is another ground for comparison of music and architecture: the indeterminateness of their products. For these appear to possess almost limitless variability in varying situations. A building is not in all respects the same building under the transforming influence of changing hours and seasons; a melody is not properly the same melody in the different guise of its rendering by the several instruments. The analogy is not in all ways perfect, for the composer explicitly calls for the use of definite instruments in each passage of his composition, while the architect is compelled to build without reference to the uncontrollable transforming effects of atmosphere and light. Or almost without such reference. Definite provision for atmospheric peculiarities is, so Carpenter claims, part of the explanation of certain architectural mannerisms.

I am tempted to hazard the seeming absurdity that the East Mediterranean people live in a much less *three-dimensional world* than the North Europeans. . . . Is it any wonder that the deep portals and the great Gothic interiors never grew

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in Italian but flourished in Northern European air? And is it not a futility to take Greek architecture, calculated for visual projection upon parallel planes which the climate of Greece enforces, and to transplant it to Liverpool or Berlin where it will be riddled with depth, like a curtain shot through with holes?

But the significance of light and setting for the perceived effect of a building is not quite disposed of by reference to the two opposed atmospheric conditions of a clear and a misty climate. Any given work of architecture where it stands runs a gamut of changes corresponding to the moods of differing moments, of differing days. And not only is it a case of protean changes in light and shadow, scarcely twice the same, but of all the variable conditions of the building's immediate surroundings. For although the strict limits of any example of this art are those of its confining walls and roof, buildings as actually perceived can never be wholly detached from their environment by which their total effect is either harmed or enhanced.

In one's acquaintance with a palace or a church it will often be its appearance under the quite contingent circumstances of one's first encounter that fixes for all time the special character that it seems to own. Thus Salisbury in the deep greenness of full summer and played upon by the long shadows of late afternoon may appear the true Salisbury—the one most deeply revealing of its essential nature. And Orvieto, with its mosaic façade of gold and blue, of green and amber and black, may seem to be rightly viewed only in the

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clear light of very early morning. And Pisa, luminously gleaming, as in the shadows of twilight; and Assisi, white and dazzling, as smitten by the fierce brightness of Umbrian noon when the black cypresses of the hillside stand out in fullest contrast. It may make all the difference for the extracting of its full flavour whether one has come upon Ludlow castle in the green and gold of summer or under the intense whiteness of deep snow; whether one has first beheld the contour of Notre Dame in broad daylight or blackly silhouetted against a midnight sky.

The larger context by which a building is mellowed and made into a vivid experience may even include special features preceding the face-to-face encounter. If the approach to Chartres is through morning air made clamorous by the wild tumult of bells like beating wings of birds in confused and panic flight, this circumstance will powerfully enhance the first impact of the incomparable vision of the cathedral itself. In the same way the abiding impression of its interior may be vivified by the extraneous but wholly congruent stimulus of heavy incense and the exultant voices of a pilgrim procession advancing toward the high altar.

Most of all, perhaps, it is the architecture of a great modern city, where by no possibility can one view a building in utter isolation, that the transforming effects of light and surroundings become supreme. In its actual contour the silhouette described by the buildings to the south of New York's Central Park as seen from the north remains the same under all the vicissitudes of summer and winter, evening and morn-

ing. And yet in a deeper sense it is a different city of which we there get a prospect with each critical change of hour and season. It is one city framed in the radiant green of spring-time; another in the sombreness of a winter afternoon, and seen through a curtain of silently falling snow. It is one city irradiated by the golden light of early morning; a different one in the magic of blue twilight when those same buildings tower in the gathering darkness and a myriad of lights, suddenly flaring, impart to the seemingly translucent mass the floating, insubstantial quality of enchanted palaces and pavilions of the Arabian Nights.

In a comparable way a passage of music, retaining its identical rhythm and with unchanged intervals, may assume as many different aspects as there are different tone qualities in the instruments of the orchestra. The melody inaugurated by the 'cello in the first movement of Schubert's Symphony in B Minor is the same, and recognizable, yet unutterably strange when it is later given by all the strings. The theme of the second movement of the *Scheherazade* is not one melody but four as it is rendered successively by bassoon, oboe, strings and flute. And when that infinitely haunting sequence of tones uttered by the French horn in the last movement of Brahms' First Symphony is repeated two octaves higher in the voice of the flute, it is not the same phrase but its celestial echo. The two occurrences are as unlike as St. Mark's, golden and gorgeous in the resplendence of day, and turned into a thing of white enchantment in the light of the moon.

In connection with the effect of architectural exteriors there

raises the problem of architectural types. These one might classify in a number of different ways. But disregarding historical, engineering, and all similar considerations, let us say that the two fundamental alternatives for architectural appeal to the eye and the emotions are the two contrasted effects of high soaring and of wide expansion. This, of course, leaves totally out of account all details of construction and adornment. It throws together a Greek temple, a Roman basilica, and a Byzantine church, as over against a Gothic cathedral and a modern skyscraper. But it is indisputable that emotional apprehension of a building as a whole is so bound up with the two kinds of motor response—vertical and horizontal—that characterization of all building with reference to these types of reaction seems to outweigh every other in importance. Without question it is vertical stress that is exhibited in all the masterpieces of American skyscraper construction. It is the same stress that we find in French Gothic, whether of cathedrals with their spires, or of the *château* with its rising clusters of turrets. On the other hand it is dominantly horizontal lines that are emphasized in the Greek, Byzantine, and Romanesque, for even arches when round contribute more to the sweep from side to side than to any sweep upward. Satisfactory, on the whole, though this two-fold classification of architecture is for a fundamental evaluation of most of the greatest building, it does of course leave out of account those constructions whose motor appeal is subordinate to the gratification of the feeling for static pattern. The façades of many admirable buildings—of Renaissance pal-

aces such as those of Florence and Siena—are notable chiefly for the quiet harmony of their proportions, and for the beautiful breaking up of surface by the ingenious proportions and placing of windows and doors.

Another basis for classification of architectural types, and one more traditional, is the presence or absence of the arch, and the nature of the arch employed. Egyptian and Greek building employed the flat lintel. From the time of the Romans onward the arch has been very generally used, leaving aside the adaptations of the Greek in much Renaissance work and in many modern churches and public buildings. There is a distinct and peculiar emotional effect belonging to each of the three main types of arch: the horseshoe, the pointed, and the round. It is no more possible to describe and explain these several emotional qualities than it is to describe and explain the individual quality of major and minor key. Like a scale, each type of arch may derive much of its individual and seemingly intrinsic expressiveness from factors of training and convention. To a Moor the horseshoe arch may never have given the peculiar and somewhat exotic effect that it has for the western eye. To the Roman the round arch may never have imparted the sense of soberness that it yields for modern vision, accustomed to the pointed as well. But for immediate perception each kind of arch at least appears to possess, necessarily and profoundly, its particular character.

And it is of course possible that one's feeling about them all is well grounded. Perhaps it is not arbitrary that a curve of which the ends turn backward and inward should evoke



Photograph by Alinari



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an effect of strangeness—a strangeness of exceeding beauty. Or that a curve consisting of a half or some lesser portion of a circle should appear noble, serious, and just. Or that a tall and slender curve whose halves, meeting sharply and constituting the intersection of two parabolas, should possess a light and soaring quality. Perhaps some profound adjustment of our bodies to the pervasive influence of the force of gravity generates a deep sense within us of an intrinsic significance of line. It may be that we thus apprehend, though without possibility of conceptually justifying that apprehension, the individual character of curves conforming in different ways to gravitational laws.

Similarly it is conceivable that the semitone given as the second interval of the scale instead of the third connotes no mere habituation to an arbitrarily instituted system of scales. The *mélancholy* induced by this premature minor second is perhaps evidence of the ear's sensitiveness to a quite objectively grounded pathos in the lesser interval following immediately upon the whole tone of the first. The interval is premature, of course, only by reference to the major scale from which the minor is felt as a departure, and that scale is itself but one of many alternative modes. There are several other possible positions for the two half-tones besides that between the third and fourth and seventh and eighth degrees of the scale. And why half-tones at all? There is the whole-tone scale of Debussy. And why eight notes instead of more—or less? But whether resting upon a real or a factitious basis, the first three tones of the ascending minor scale appear the symbol,

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the abstract image, of the world's frustration. They seem the audible equivalent of its sadness, the counterpart of its yearning and melancholy. It is in the intervals themselves that we appear to find the emotional quality, just as we appear to find in the curves of the several arches the emotional effects which they induce.

Not in all cases is a single kind of arch used exclusively in an architectural construction any more than it is a major or minor key that prevails throughout a musical composition. It might be anticipated that a confusion of emotional effects would thereby result. Sometimes this does indeed happen. But sometimes the blend is but an added item of perfection. No one could deplore the slender shafts of light with rounded top employed in Chartres in combination with the early Gothic pointed arches. And the modulations from major to minor and back again that occur throughout the Allegretto of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony are surely an important one among many reasons for the heart-breaking beauty of that poignant movement.

But there are two arts of architecture, really, an art of interiors as well as of exteriors. And sometimes we are transported by perfectly natural transitions from one to the other in passing through wide-open portals. Sometimes there is no seeming connection between the two aspects. Milan Cathedral, a construction full of trivialities from the outside, is within an astonishing vastness of mystery and darkness.

There are many pleasures derivable from the contemplation of an interior, and important among them is the discov-

ery of the marvellous effects of light and shadow: light as diffused brightness broken by shafts and pools of shadow, and light in all its chromatic richness as transmitted through coloured glass. But the primary function, aesthetically, of an interior, is the revelation of space. The space thus revealed is space magnified, deepened, widened, and rendered dynamic—space possessed, as it were, of eddies and currents which whirl upward or outward, carrying us, in a cathedral, into the quiet harbours of dim side chapels, or powerfully drawing us around the great swinging curve of the ambulatory, or rushing us skyward past triforium gallery and clerestory into the shadows of the vaulted roof.

Many devices are employed in a building for thus enlarging the space which it encloses, and exploiting it to its uttermost reaches. One means to this is the rhythmic repetitions of successive systems of columns and arches starting at the bottom and leading step by step upward. And for the three-dimensional intensification from front to back we find the same device of repeated elements: arch after arch, supported by column after column, or by clusters of columns, diminishing by perspective and by increasing dimness into the distance toward the altar. Proper choice of materials and their proper manipulation may also accomplish a desired increase of a dimension. Darkening of a ceiling will lower the apparent height of walls, brightening of it will increase that height. Semi-obscurity is a powerful aid in the magnification of space. It contributes an artificial distance by reducing distinctness, as if the objects seen were very far away. Enormous

multiplication of columns, as in Westminster Cathedral, may produce an illusion of vastness almost like that of the interior of a great forest.

By no means all architectural treatment of space is designed to impart a sense of increased spatial magnitude in all dimensions. It is perhaps, indeed, more often an effect of enlargement in one dimension only, or at most in two dimensions, that is striven for. For the chief test of the aesthetic perfection of nearly every interior, whether it be an entire building or a single room, might be said to be the clearness of its effect of soaring or of brooding, of narrowing or of expanding, of plunging forward or of sharply halting. It should be as impossible to feel uncertain as to which effect is intended as it is impossible to be unsure whether a melody is sombre or joyous, portentous or delicate and gay. This means that a successful interior will be notably high or broad, deep or low, narrow or shallow—or unambiguously appear to be such. For these are the emotionally-toned spatial effects which architecture is capable of producing. Most rooms, and many entire buildings, in the interest of utility, lighting, heating, or sanitation, are given proportions of no emotional import whatsoever. They are of a deadly neutrality of unexaggerated dimensions. But if an interior cannot be definitely high it should be made to appear definitely low. If there is considerable discrepancy between length and breadth the discrepancy should be augmented, not disguised. If one cannot have the loftiness of the Gothic, one's feelings demand something like the over-arching lowness of an Anglo-Saxon crypt.

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If the splendid sidewise amplitude of a great court is not forthcoming one would like something like the exaggerated length of the corridors of a museum. The only exceptions to this rule that proportions should be distorted in the direction of one dimension or another are cases where the effect aimed at is one of complete largeness, or—as would seldom be wanted—of excessive smallness, as perhaps in a tomb. For an impression of pervasive spaciousness balanced proportions, with no exaggeration anywhere, may be ventured, but at the risk of the builder, at the peril of the beholder. For it seems to require rare genius in an architect to achieve from quiet harmony of height and breadth and depth an effect of spatial significance; and on the part of the onlooker it demands rare capacities of spatial apprehension to derive from such proportions an intense awareness of spatiality.

Like architecture, music is two arts, though in its case the two are not necessarily divided, but in the greatest compositions unite to produce their joint effects. There is one art of melody, an art as it were two-dimensional, and another, three-dimensional, the art of harmony. Seldom do we find either alone; at the very least there are nearly always two voices, with a consequent enrichment and complication of the bare silhouette described by the ascending and descending movement of the voice that leads. In the looser meaning of the word, melody must occur always in music as a result of this movement from tone to tone. But in a stricter sense not all music exhibits this element. The different effects produced by a relative preponderance of harmony or of melody is

made clear if one compares the Overture of *Tristan and Isolde* or Debussy's *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune* with a Bach fugue, or, better, with the flute obbligato of the "Aus Liebe will mein Heiland Sterben" of the *St. Matthew Passion*. Throughout this astonishing passage we have the perfection of pure music—a fine, thin pencilling of sound, disarmingly gentle and subdued but with an almost grim insistence. It is portentous with a quality of the inevitable, like the handwriting on the wall that struck terror to the soul of Belshazzar.

In the entire domain of the arts there is indeed to be found nothing so deeply characterized by this quality of seeming necessity as a great melody. More completely even than a perfect lyric, melody produces a sense of inevitability, as if it were no mere human invention but a discovery, as of a hitherto unknown continent, or of a new comet in the sky. It is this effect that we experience from such things as the Andante of Schubert's Quartet in D Minor, from the Finale of Brahms' First Symphony, and from the second movements of Beethoven's Third and Fifth and Seventh. But even such melodies as there take place derive much of their quality from the harmonies which underlie them and by virtue of which they undergo their successive metamorphoses. In Beethoven pre-eminently we find, indeed, the most perfect synthesis of the two elements—which is perhaps one of the main reasons for his supremacy. His music pays some penalty for its utter balance. In its richness it misses part of the sterner, austere beauty of Bach, and it achieves perhaps no-

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where the piercing sweetness to which Schubert attains. On the other hand in its greater intellectualism it has not quite the melodious serenity of Brahms, still less the unrestrained emotionality of Wagner. It steers between the extremes of two orders of beauty, achieving an unparalleled blend of their diversified perfections.

In their shared indifference to the limited world of things, music and architecture enjoy a unique opportunity to do what all art attempts. Both alike are free to undertake the portrayal of man himself—not, like painting and sculpture, in the way of reproducing his mere outward lineaments; not, like poetry and drama, in the way of retailing the vicissitudes of his experience. It is a profounder kind of portraiture which these two arts engage in: a rendering of the very principles of human bodily existence, a rendering of the very essence of consciousness. In some measure the more literally representative arts do this as well. Their preoccupation is no mere imaging of the outward man, no mere retailing of the diverse occasions for human weal and woe. Painting and sculpture, poetry and drama, all participate in the great enterprise of reproducing and perfecting the rhythms of body and spirit. But these two arts of pure form translated into visible and audible terms are more magnificently unshackled than all the others by any constraint. Architecture is the only complete abstract embodiment of the forces that pervade the physical being of man—its powerful adjustments to the pull of gravity, its large risings and sinkings, and the rich exuberance of its vital processes manifested throughout balanced limbs and rhyth-

mically functioning muscles. Vast and simple are the symmetries that the architect devises, imposing them upon masses themselves inert, but rendered by him dynamic, themselves chaotic and crumbling under the resistless attraction of the earth, but by him made orderly and vital.

It is thus his very life that man there discovers, but possessed of an assurance and harmony that his own organism never attains. His deeply sensed weight and sore need for balance, his symmetries and rhythmic tensions and relaxations, are given back to him, magnified and glorified. And since this is so, since an architectural triumph is the very image of man, the same and yet magnificently different, it is in a position to reconcile the divergent urges, the incompatible emotional needs which the conscious human body unceasingly gives rise to: the need at once for the fierce squandering of energy and for repose; for stability and for wild soaring; for triumphant effort and for a transcendence of all need for effort; for tumultuousness and for peace. By its complete solution of the never-ceasing antithesis of support and burden, of weight and lightness, of changelessness and change, architecture with a kind of Titanic serenity mediates in a supreme way emotional appeasement and salvation. It is, in the world of space and matter, the goal and perfection of the arts concerned with space. Of painting and sculpture alike it is the recapitulation and culmination. Essentially freer than either, it retains many of the special qualities of each. All the appeal possessed by sculpture resulting from sheer texture and tactile values it too possesses,

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employing a wider range of materials for the eliciting of these immediate pleasures: brick and wooden beams, heavy metals, and marble. And colour it likewise exhibits: the varied hues of steel and bronze and iron; the blue and amber, green and purple of tiles; the deep rose of brick; and the richness of copper, brass, and even of gold-leaf. And the colour effects of sandstone and veined marble, of porphyry, onyx, jade, and all the rocks quarried from the recesses of the earth. Thus it may possess the accessory appeal of the rare and remote, and of what has required the vast labour of men's hands. In its greater endurance than works of less heroic proportions it may even achieve the glamour that attaches to what has withstood the strife of centuries and mingled in the affairs of men and civilizations long since vanished. All this it may possess as adventitious and super-numerary enhancement, not needed, not intrinsically belonging. For its proper and abiding appeal is that of an imaginative creation in which the rhythms and forces of man's body have been married to inchoate matter for the making of a thing possessed of more than the eternal order and rhythm of the one, and, of the other, more than its cosmic, brooding weight and stillness.

And if architecture, as the purest embodiment of the abstract forms which it shares with painting and sculpture, can be called the limit toward which they tend, music, the temporal version of their spiritual rhythms, is their goal likewise. But still more is it the goal and the culmination of all the arts of time. What the advance of poetry is over prose,

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that even more fully is music's advance over poetry. Pure music, says Santayana,

is pure art. Its extreme abstraction is balanced by its entire spontaneity, and, while it has no external significance, it bears no internal curse.

The poetic naming of a desolation or an ecstasy is a naming which carries with it some power to induce the very feeling which it describes. For poetry is more than half music. But music itself—hypnosis freed of poetry's articulate discourse, persuasion that has risen from the shackles of grammar and become a pure enchantment—is no longer a description of an emotion, nor yet its instigator. It is emotion, unadulterated, innocent of the contingencies of its human origin, and emancipated from every contingent claim.

Thus while architecture has as its function a kind of deification of the forces and qualities of the physical nature of man, music is the intimate portrait of the innermost recesses of his spirit. It is at once the symbol and the realization of the unresting tides whose impalpable waters wash ceaselessly over the sands of consciousness. But music's ebb and flow, its vast accelerations and retardations, its waxings and wanings, its audible breathings and shuddering pulsations, are more than a duplicate of the currents of feeling and desire that beset the human heart. Music is the image of those movements but without their abortiveness, and possessed of an amplitude, a vigour, a triumphant completeness that emotion seeks but never securely attains. What grief would be, and rapture, what yearning and weariness and regret, what

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passion, and gaiety and pity, and all the pangs and secret delights and terrors of the spirit, that music is, in its flawless expressiveness. Everything that, without music's aid, man must endeavour to body forth by a glance from the eye, a touch of the hand, a smile, a tear, a quiver of the lips; by halting speech or passionate attitude and gesture—all this does music render articulate. Ecstatic melody is epitomized tenderness, or sorrow, or elation. The cadence of a falling or a rising phrase is the only unimpeachable utterance of supreme agony or supreme blessedness. Music is the one adequate mirroring of the unearthly agitation and the vast quietude by which the spirit of man is from hour to hour overtaken.

And because it is thus reproductive of the rhythms actually of emotion itself, and is able to transcribe them in unalloyed purity, it, more than any other form of human creation, is the reconciler and healer of human conflict. For man, therefore, ardently desirous of the fruition of all hopes, the miraculous realization of speechless dreams and vain wishes, music is at hand to confer a rich contentment. By the beguilement of its enchanted syllables it can make the old appear new, the difficult easy, and, gratifying all the urge to adventure, it yet can solace with the warm intimacy of the tried and familiar. It can extract the sting from pain, and endow pleasure with poignancy. Mortal man, with his pathetic and incurable obsession for conditions and states of being which in no complete or enduring way may receive earthly indulgence, may look to music for healing, for renewal, and for purification.

CHAPTER IX

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ALL life is a compromise between the rival goods of concentration and dispersion. The issue occurs in education under the guise of the conflicting ideals of specialization and wide acquaintance with many fields. It confronts us in the choice between few but absorbing human relationships and contacts more numerous but less intimate and obsessing. It is this issue, more perhaps than any other, that is involved in the settlement of the question of the possible kinds and the possible limits of human art.

Now, the already recognized forms of art are many, but it might well seem that they could be more. And for those already in existence fairly well-defined restrictions are observed, some of which might seem better dispensed with. Why, one may ask, should not art be as varied as possible, and as free? What conceivable reason should there be for ruling against it in either of two ways—as to the variety of its forms, and as to its freedom within those forms? Indeed, for artists, and still more for critics, to lay down rules regarding what the arts may and may not do would be stupid

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and intolerable interference, unless those rules were designed to increase the ultimate pleasure the arts provide. To acquiesce, therefore, either in the constraining of art or in its further emancipation ought to imply a belief that by so doing the interest will be served of just the right compromise for human experience between values of richness and values of intensity.

This question of compromise arises most crucially in connection with the problem of combining two or more arts for their mutual enhancement. The question here, as nearly always when we have to do with the limits of artistic possibility, is the question of the limits of attention. Several purely reflex actions may take place simultaneously without interference because they do not require the co-operation of consciousness. But an unconscious aesthetic experience is a contradiction in terms. Only if two or more qualitatively different appeals may generate a composite experience richer or more intense than can result from either alone, would it seem expedient to permit their combination. And this is the problem of opera; it is indeed the problem involved in any projected combining of two kinds of stimulus.

Odour and sound are far more intimately related than sound and colour inasmuch as both are spaceless; both cause a turning inward of the attention. A compound art in which processions of odours were the invisible *dramatis personae* enacting a ghostly ballet imitative of the accompanying musical suggestions would be theoretically a far more successful kind of opera than that derived from combined music and

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drama. Odours would be powerful allies also of poetry for the extracting from it of its full emotional value. And a subdued musical accompaniment sounding throughout a spoken drama would be a more promising type of compound art than opera as it now exists—a far more practicable experiment, also, than perfumed music. There is probably no scene in any play for which some appropriate musical counterpart could not be found; and for enhancing of emotional effect music is, of course, without rival. The abortive, cheap, and intermittent use of this stimulus, as we sometimes now encounter it on the stage, is a parody of the suggested experiment and not its fair exemplification.

Many minor arts, or mere aesthetic developments of life, are imaginable. Schopenhauer declared that there could be an art of hydraulics—an exploiting of the potentialities of water comparable with the architect's exploiting of solid matter. Never yet has there been a complete development of this suggestion. Neither water nor fire has been imaginatively used. Fountains in gardens and burning logs in open fireplaces are the chief forms other than the purely practical in which, in our every-day life, we employ these elements as ends in themselves. In connection with religious ceremonial the potentialities of fire and smoke have been somewhat more fully realized. Swinging censers, burning torches, and the incomparable mellow flame of candles contribute importantly to the total religious experience.

Many kinds of solid substance have been similarly far too infrequently employed for the deriving of beautiful

effects. Glass, whose loveliness the old builders of cathedrals fully realized, plays not even yet a sufficiently important part in our existence. H. G. Wells in one of his Utopias postulates glass-paved roads. It is quite possible that, following a tendency already evident, many of the buildings of the future will be skeletons of steel entirely filled in with glass—glass transparent or merely translucent, and of all the colours of the rainbow. Glass for mirrors we have had for centuries. But entire rooms—ceilings, and walls alike—composed of mirrors, and built in strange and lovely irregular shapes, might give marvellous untried interior effects.

Colour we are less timid about than of old. Less and less frequently are kitchens and baths the chilly retreats of unimaginative whiteness that they were not long ago. But yet more gorgeous colour effects should be forthcoming if we fully exploited all the glittering or richly toned substances such as sheet-copper, brass, crystal and tiles.

Innovations in manner of dress constitute another matter for speculation. For all occasions when people must be seen in large numbers a more general use of uniforms holds tremendous aesthetic possibilities. Not a single uniform for all would be desirable, but many kinds of uniform indicative perhaps of the various callings and professions. This we already have to a limited degree in the special dress of policemen, sailors, soldiers, firemen—and it is to their dress that the members of these groups owe their chief glamour and charm. Religious ceremonial is incalculably enhanced by the conventionalized robes of the priests and the gowns of the

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choir; academic celebration owes much of its special flavour to the traditional cap and gown of the scholar. It is because of the greater uniformity of their clothes that a crowd of men is invariably more attractive than a crowd of women. A restaurant in which waiters or waitresses are identically dressed acquires thereby a formalized effect analogous to that belonging to a ballet or a procession.

Increase in the number and the kinds of uniforms worn for all public occasions would not for a moment mean an increase of stereotyped dress for private life. It might even stimulate greater inventiveness in the contriving of lovely and exotic costumes corresponding to place and person, to occasion and hour and mood. More colour, rarer fabrics, greater attention to beauty of line and fold might be better cultivated in a world in which for public appearance uniforms for men and women alike were the rule rather than the exception.

Ritual in most of its forms is largely vanishing from the world. Imaginative gallantries and complexities of etiquette our more practical age tends to let fall into disuse as gratuitous and undesirable complications of life. But hand-kissing is just as graceful and charming as in the days of knighthood with its stirrup-cup and other romantic practices and conventions. Rituals of politeness, of every-day conduct and of courtship, possess an enhanced value in a civilization necessarily devoid of much of the ceremonial of earlier periods. Formalized behaviour is sometimes objected to as making for insincerity and decay of genuine feeling; but it must not be forgotten that it may serve instead as an incitement to new







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and rich emotional experience. It may beautify common moments, introducing an element of art into the normally unimaginative conduct of life.

Of the more highly developed forms of art there are perhaps just three possible extensions that can be imagined. There might be a discovery of totally new forms of presentation, as was the *clavilux* with its colour metamorphoses of abstract designs presented in perpetual movement. There might be combinations of existing forms, such as we already have in opera. There might be an extension of the scope of the recognized forms of art by modification of subject-matter or technique. The chief obstacle in the way of all three developments alike is the limitation of human attention. But there is also the obstacle of the limitations of the natural world. It is less the idiosyncrasies of human sense-organs than the unmanageable character of odours themselves that stands in the way of contriving a genuine art from that provocative source of emotional stimulation. But chiefly it is human disabilities that prevent the limitless development of the arts.

For the reception of stimulations from the external world the human organism possesses but five organs of sense. Qualities other than those thereby received are not only inexperienceable: they are unimaginable. But vast ranges of potential sensation there must be, corresponding to the wide areas of vibration rate intervening, for example, between the most rapid perceptible by the ear—somewhere in the neighbourhood of fifty thousand a second—and the least rapid to which the eye is sensitive—somewhere in the region of five hundred

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trillion. We are blind, deaf, insensible to any effects that the multitude of intervening vibration-rates may be producing. And so long as we continue to be provided with only our present meagre equipment of sensory end-organs, such effects may not be sensed, still less made use of in any form of art.

Even for the qualities yielded to the senses that we actually possess our sensitivity is sadly limited. Only a comparatively violent stimulus in any domain is emphatic enough to stir our sluggish consciousness to wakeful attention. We are very far indeed from possessing auditory responsiveness adequate to detect the growing of the grass; unimaginably far from emulating that Princess of the fairy-tale whose sleep was disturbed, through sixteen high-piled mattresses, by a crumpled rose-leaf. Unlike even the creatures of the brute world, we are incapable of sensing by their odour the invisible foot-prints left by our own kind, incapable of perceiving faint and far-off movements and murmurs that, to the keener eye and ear of the sub-human, are heralds of good-fortune or disaster. Any art that man may contrive is limited in its materials to the relatively few and coarse and intense qualities to which alone the human senses respond. His powers, moreover, of attention and memory are weak. Only a limited multiplication of successive items can he retain and organize into a totality whose earlier phases he clearly and distinctly recalls.

In the choice of materials for his poetry and drama the artist is further limited to a rendering only of such situations and provocations to misery and happiness as fall within the scope of his understanding. And he comes into the world

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endowed with a very special and limited equipment of potential responses. An inheritance from forefathers whose survival depended upon their possession of traits adapted to preserve them in their battle for life, largely determines in each individual what he may do and think and feel. His biological inheritance is, moreover, further modified and distorted by artificial traditions slowly built up through centuries of social adjustment. Some of these traditions fall into disuse and are supplanted by others as the generations pass. The literature of each civilization, reflecting as it does these passing codes of honour and dishonour, is consequently only in part comprehensible to individuals of a later era, bound in their turn by new codes of conduct. The recurrent theme of Greek tragedy (obligation to vengeance even against those near and dear to the avenger for injury committed by them upon members of the family or clan)—this can be only half understood by modern civilized people. The entire outlook underlying such a code of moral obligation is as remote and strange as would be the conventions of inhabitants of another planet. Similarly, in a civilization in which a tradition of monogamous marriage fosters and justifies emotions of jealousy, the plot of a certain old Chinese novel may appear almost incredible. In that tale the lovely heroine consents to marriage with the hero provided he will marry also her dearly loved cousin. And all are rendered happy.

The vagaries of human feelings and desires corresponding to unpredictable alterations in the body of customs that may in the future develop leaves quite unpredictable, likewise, the

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potential transformations in the subject-matter of the arts. Furthermore, unforeseen scientific discoveries which may in the future alter the entire fabric of man's life would correspondingly alter also that of his art. The possibility of ectogenesis—development of the growing embryo outside instead of inside the human organism—opens out vistas of radical changes in the scheme of the life of woman. Entire new adjustments in the relation of the sexes and in the institution of the family might even result from those biological discoveries rendering the very practice of ectogenesis possible. One cannot predict how far such new adjustments might alter the conception of romance. Correspondingly one cannot say to what extent not only drama and the novel but also lyric poetry would need to seek and to exploit quite new materials.

The life of man is brief. Not very much in all probability, even in the remote future, will the span of childhood, adolescence, maturity, and old age be appreciably lengthened. This brevity of life will continue to determine in a myriad of ways human standards and conventions. It now imposes certain restrictions upon the prolonging of the period of education, determines somewhat the age of marriage, and sets definite limits to the scope of ambition and enterprise. Shaw's speculation in *Back to Methuselah* regarding a potential enlargement of the span of life opens up possibilities for a corresponding enlargement of experience. Not least among the consequences of considerable prolongation of life might be changes in the ideals of art.

For the tragic brevity of existence has been a theme always

of deep emotional import. Not untimely death alone, but even the limited scope of a life lived to its normal end, is the pre-occupation of a large part of drama and poetry. The sense of life's brief duration permeates likewise much great painting and sculpture. If there were not so pathetically few springtimes for young love, so meagre a period for participation in the raptures of existence, we could scarcely feel so keenly the poignant quality of all short-lived things. The exceeding beauty that we discover in the vanishing qualities of the world is, beyond question, intensified by our perception of its omen of our own brief futility. The aroma of pure enchantment that clings to the slim crescent moon, to the first flowers of spring, to the earliest moments of dawn, is fostered by the vague undercurrent of our awareness that the moon will wax and then wane, the flowers fade, the dawn be over, —even as we ourselves. If we were deathless, or could hope for an ampler period for surrender to the joys of sentient life, transiency wherever manifested could hardly possess for us its character of almost unutterable sadness. The discrepancy between our thirst for prolonged quaffing from the cup of life and the utter fragility of that cup is what corrupts for us some of our most intense and yet regretful pleasures in life and art alike. It is quite impossible to tell how seriously impaired might be our appreciation of what now seems to us an infinitely haunting melody, an ecstatic lyric, or a solemn building or carving, if the conflict between craving for permanence and unceasing subjection to the unenduring were removed altogether from our experience.

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Encounter with restrictions which human idiosyncrasies impose is, then, for art not only unavoidable but perhaps, in the last analysis, a source of strength. Not merely such limitations as it could not possibly transcend but others also it may advantageously yield to. Abstaining from the use of colour in the representation of human forms restricts the sensuous appeal of sculpture, but it ensures also an avoidance of a degree of realism that would be fatal to the producing of full artistic effect. Not from moral but purely from aesthetic motives one may approve likewise an abstaining from the viciously suggestive, on the part of painter, sculptor, and dramatist. For a number of reasons Puritan censorship of art is an abomination. But observance of some of the very restrictions which that censorship endeavours to impose may well result in an increase of the purely aesthetic delights which art promotes. Vicious incitement of the imagination is to be deplored as militating against the attainment of fullest pleasure in abstract form and in the immediate sensuous appeal belonging to all artistic inventions.

On the other hand, greater imagination in the search for a wider variety of subject-matter, and greater adventurousness in devising new modes for its expression, is greatly to be commended. Literature, as indeed almost every other art, has in recent years manifested unexampled vigour and fertility in the way of interesting and even audacious experiment. On the one hand there has occurred the erratic expressionism (or impressionism) of Gertrude Stein, on the other hand unprecedented excursions into realism. The latter include, in

particular, mastery of the art of portraying the stream of consciousness such as that exemplified in the novels of Dorothy Richardson and in Schnitzler's little masterpiece *Fräulein Else*. And there has been another kind of writing in the field so magnificently developed by H. G. Wells in his scientific romances. Different again is the work involving flights of sheer poetical fancy such as not so very long ago Oscar Wilde gave us in his exquisite fairy tales and Hudson in his *Green Mansions*. This literary versatility of the immediate past and of the present augurs well for the invention of yet other species to be developed in the future. There are untold dramatic possibilities in the realm of the sciences, in history, in archaeology,—perhaps even in sociology and in the science of numbers.

The ethical reformer declares that nothing matters in the way of knowledge but what results in better living; the practical person limits the value of truth to what contributes ultimately to prosperity and comfort. A rival claim to each of these contentions may be set up in the saying that very little truth in the long run possesses permanent worth if it does not stimulate imagination and foster emotion. In so far as new knowledge to be acquired in the future may do this it will automatically become a candidate for inclusion among potential artistic subjects.

Every discussion of the range of possibilities for the field of the arts must necessarily take place from one or another of three points of view: that of the creator, that of the appreciator, or that of the work of art itself. The aesthetic theo-

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ricing of Benedetto Croce takes as its focus the first of these. For him there is no passive percipient to be considered. The observer, in so far as he appreciates, *is* artist. Nor is there, properly speaking, any purely objective work of art to take account of. Art is for him expression; but expression, even expressiveness, is art. Adequacy of expressiveness of the artist's state of mind and feeling is the only possible aesthetic criterion; no judgment is possible, therefore, except by reference to that creator's state of mind. But since this can never really be known except by the artist himself it would seem to follow that all genuine aesthetic analysis must assume the form of self-analysis. Bosanquet makes a pertinent comment upon Croce's doctrine:

Beauty, he sees, is for the mind and in the mind. A physical thing, supposed unperceived and unfelt, cannot be said in the full sense to possess beauty. But he forgets throughout, I must think, that though feeling is necessary to its embodiment, yet also the embodiment is necessary to feeling.

Since for Croce creative intuition pure and simple constitutes art, the question of future artistic possibilities is resolved into the question of the mind's capacity for intuitive functioning. The presence or absence of new objective artistic forms, still less an appreciative audience, matters not a whit.

But aesthetic criticism is possible which takes as its point of departure the work of art itself. This leaves out of account the artist's intentions regarding it; and even also its appreciation by subsequent observers. Such a point of view at once reveals itself as highly unfruitful. If neither the artist's de-

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sires nor the public's gratification is to be considered, little is left to say about standards of aesthetic value. Only the critic's unwarranted assumption of some immediate revelation vouchsafed him would enable him to declare what is good and what is bad and to give reasons for his pronouncement. This *impasse* drives us on, therefore, to the only remaining point of departure for aesthetic speculation: the nature and demands of the ultimate consumer—the person who derives delight from the creations of his fellow-men.

To adopt as one's sole basis for aesthetic criticism the pleasure induced by art involves, however, a new difficulty. It commits us to the position of relativism. According to this we must say that if delight is intense the cause of that delight is a significant aesthetic object. We must say that each perceiver is an adequate determiner of aesthetic value, and that if testimony differs there need be no umpire to judge between the divergent judgments. This means that we may speak only of value for you, for me, for another—that we may make no judgment of value as such.

Now, of all domains to which this principle of complete relativity may be applied, art might seem the best adapted to profit from the application. Since the *raison d'être* of a work of art is its power to inspire emotion, and since emotions are not the same in all individuals, the conclusion appears to follow that a work is admirable if so it appears, otherwise not; and that it may be good and also not good at the same time to different observers.

But the position of relativism does not involve quite the

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chaos of wildly divergent valuations that might at first appear inevitable. Alternating fashions in taste such as preference now for the classical, now for the romantic, at one time for the realistic, at another for the highly fanciful, betokens different emphases rather than mutually exclusive standards. And for the very greatest works there is found to be an enduring appreciation that is undisturbed by the fickleness of conventions. Yet even of these it would be difficult to maintain that they produce the same experience in all beholders. It is scarcely possible that a Greek of the time of Euripides derived from his plays exactly what is derived from them by a man of the twentieth century; or that we who now appreciate Marlowe and Shakespeare duplicate the appreciation felt by their contemporaries. Yet something at least there must be that is common to the two reactions.

This suggests that perhaps every work of creative imagination possesses several levels of appeal ranging from the most universally understandable to the most limited and particular. If this is so, then most fundamental would be that appeal having its roots in the basic character of the human organism—that responsiveness to forms and rhythms which is shared by all men of all ages; that emotional capacity derived from the possession of traits common to human beings whatever their individual idiosyncrasies. At the other end of the scale, most contingent and particularized, would be those aspects of the work of art which address themselves to single individuals with their peculiar temperaments, private histories and special preoccupations and prejudices. This would be the unre-

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peatable aspect of the work—flavours to be extracted once and perhaps never to be found again. In between the two extremes would lie those attributes possessing neither complete universality nor utter particularity of appeal. These would include meanings and values of special significance for one sex or for the other; and characters bound up with special codes and conventions of behaviour possessing weight for the duration of but a single civilization. Among such characters of limited validity would be those referred to by Whitehead in the following passage:

. . . if . . . two nations are somewhat widely sundered, with a different fauna and flora, the nature poetry of one nation will lack its complete directness of appeal to the other nation—compare Walt Whitman's phrase

The wide unconscious scenery of my land
for an American, with Shakespeare's

. . . this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,

for an Englishman. Of course any one, American or English, with the slightest sense for history and kinship, or with the slightest sympathetic imagination, can penetrate to the feelings conveyed by both phrases. But the direct first-hand intuition, derived from earliest childhood memories, is for the one nation that of continental width, and for the other nation that of the little island world.

To admit the propriety of any such divergent appeals as are here stressed is to admit the propriety of regarding associations as part of the intrinsic content of art. And this pre-

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precipitates a large controversial issue already taken account of. Once again, in defiance of Clive Bell's dictum that art must not draw upon knowledge of life for its effect, it may be said that the appreciation not only of literature but of the visual arts as well does and must involve for most of us considerable play of associations drawn from vital experience. These associations insinuate themselves into the very fabric of the art and are given back to us as an intrinsic part of the object contemplated. In the encounter with any masterpiece, however fundamental and enduring and profoundly human its appeal, much must be missed by the young or very inexperienced. Just how much they fail to grasp it is impossible to say—just as it is quite unimaginable what an untroubled seraph would derive of tragic import from human literature with its content of essentially human significance.

Two alternative courses might seem, then, to lie open to every artist. He could on the one hand choose to render what is so generic, so universally comprehensible that all from the simplest to the most highly endowed and sophisticated may share in its enjoyment. Or else he could exploit esoteric implications and employ symbolisms and subtleties intelligible only to a small minority. The very highest art—great melody, austere carving, simple and majestic creations of the architect—exert their influence upon the many rather than upon the few. The beauty of an old English ballad, or of Giotto's Castelfranco Madonna will probably be felt in some measure by any one possessed of even the minimum equipment in sensibility. But over and above the broad, deep

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foundation of universal appeal there is surely layer upon layer of other significances accessible to a decreasing number of percipients. And at the pinnacle of that pyramid of superimposed aspects there may well be rare and particularized attributes inaccessible to all but some single observer possessed of unique discrimination—inaccessible perhaps even to him except in some propitious and fleeting moment of his life's history.

It is therefore not a choice between mutually exclusive alternatives with which the artist is really confronted. He may build for eternity but also for the passing hour. He may address himself to man and woman, young and old, happy and desolate, but he may also impart to his work delicate shades of meaning and feeling by which he need hope to awaken a response in none but some twin spirit only. If such a one never is born or is unreached by that great message, then the special perfection apprehended by himself may remain forever undiscovered. Many such highly specialized values the richest art will contain which even the artist himself is unaware of. The generalization might indeed be hazarded that every great work of art, in addition to its universal appeal and its various meanings for limited groups of observers, possesses also as many individualized values as there are actual or potential appreciators—an innumerable multitude.

So long as men and women continue to experiment in the great adventure of life there can be no reason to suppose that new subject-matter for art will not always be forthcoming. Periodically, however, apprehension has been felt that the

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materials of art were either exhausted or exhaustible. Gilbert Murray cites to this effect a poem unearthed in Babylonia which bewails the fact that already every possible subject for literature had been exploited. John Stuart Mill in his autobiography voices a corresponding fear that all potential music may sometime be actualized, leaving nothing further to be discovered.

But it seems rather as if the more art we possess the greater the potentialities for more and yet more to be contrived. The art treasures of the future may well include epics more varied and wonderful than any yet written, symphonies of grander scope and greater beauty, and architecture involving hitherto unknown principles of construction and exploiting materials not yet fabricated. Towers of Babel there may be and hanging gardens like those of Babylon but of undreamed of dimensions; bridges more marvellous than the rainbow; and ships for the air and for the depths of the sea rivalling Leviathan and all the strange monsters of prehistoric periods.

And there will undoubtedly continue to be, as there have been always, arts intimately bound up with passing phases of human history, with temporary civilizations, and impermanent emphases and concerns. In the opinion of Spengler all art that has yet arisen possesses a unique quality, expressive of these transitory conditions.

Every art—Chinese landscape or Egyptian plastic or Gothic counterpoint—is *once existent*, and departs with its soul and its symbolism never to return.

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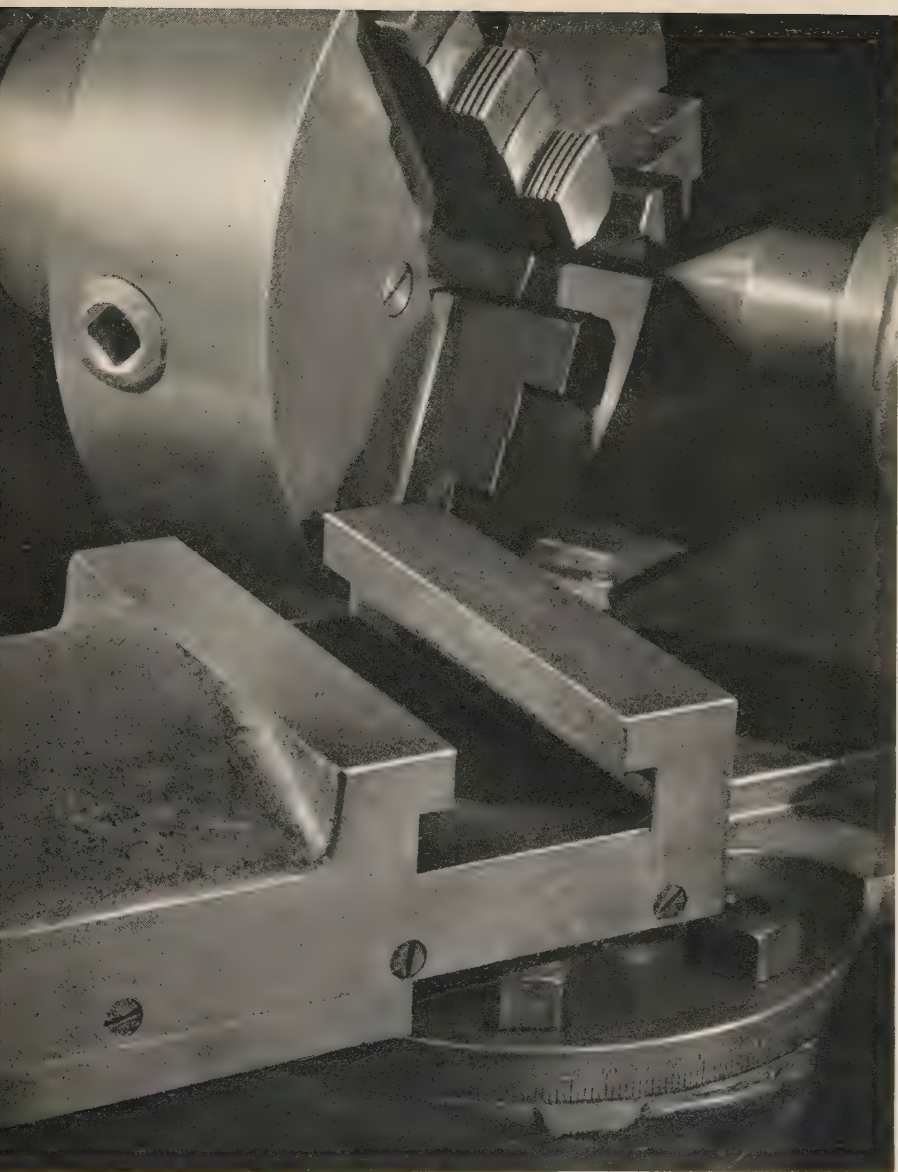
But though with passing of time and decay of former customs and traditions something of the value attaching to each distinctive rendering of every phase of development is lost, much must remain, an indestructible inheritance for all future peoples. For the deeper traits of mankind are themselves unaffected by rapidly altering outward conditions. For untold ages man will without question continue essentially unchanged, a being, joint brute and spirit, bilaterally symmetrical, pervaded by vital rhythms and subject unceasingly to the force of gravity with its far-reaching emotional reverberations. He will retain senses, reason, feelings, and impulses approximately unaltered, and his life will remain a thing of mingled joys and sorrows, vast hopes and colossal despairs. So long as this is the case the art of the past will continue to be in some measure provocative and understandable, and that of the future—devised to yield satisfactions analogous to those of innumerable past generations—will itself bear profound resemblances to the arts of its ancient ancestry.

CHAPTER X

AESTHETIC APPRECIATION AND MODES OF AESTHETIC DELIGHT

AESTHETIC sensitiveness implies several capacities. It implies uncommon excitability by the sensuous qualities of the world, and uncommon proneness to blissful absorption devoid of any practical import. It implies also delicacy of discrimination, emotional responsiveness, and a considerable measure of imagination. And some of these powers at least are insusceptible of easy cultivation. There is, moreover, a special obstacle that lies for every one in the way of aesthetic proficiency. This is the fatal tendency of all human responses whatsoever to undergo a process of hardening into stereotyped patterns of behaviour.

In certain respects this tendency is a fortunate one. Abundance of habits is generally accounted an important mark of human development. For it is easily evident that man the automaton is quicker, surer, more efficient in the accomplishment of his tasks, than man the reflective dictator of his own performances. When he needs no longer to deliberate, select, and consciously initiate his responses he may





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feel that he has achieved a coveted mastery of his body and of the instruments of progress. In crises, and in the every-day conduct of necessary business it is well that our interest and attention should be actually incapable of excitement by the irrelevant and distracting details of the threatening or useful objects surrounding us. For practical purposes it is to be counted an advantage that even our recognition of our fellow-men tends to be limited to very elliptical and swift seizing upon merely those features which are needful for bare identification. Few of us can actually recall the detailed appearance of most of those with whom we associate. We do not recall because we have not seen; but this begins to be disquieting when we consider that such failure of vision may be due to a disability that threatens to become chronic.

As children we found the blundering performance of absurdly simple operations sufficient cause for ecstasy. In ceasing to be conscious of those operations, once they were fully learned, we forfeited, in our so-called progress toward maturity, the ground for that childish delight. And many must be the primitive satisfactions that have thus become irretrievably lost—lost before ever we were born, by reason of our inheritance of ready-made reflexes achieved first by our ancestors. We are supposed to congratulate ourselves upon our obliviousness to all the activities that make for the bare maintenance of life. But we should perhaps rather lament that we cannot drain to the full the realization of the blood coursing through us, or feel the strain and pull of every muscle, and all the mysterious processes of assimilation and

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growth taking place within our vitalized bodily substance. As for our apprehension of the things outside the confines of our physical person—meagre and pitiful enough it appears if we compare it with what we are potential heirs to. Instead of a faded, vacant, and bereaved world made up of elements stereotyped by many repetitions and shorn of nearly all that makes for essential uniqueness, we might be participants in an infinitely rich experience. All this in the interest of achieving that ecstasy which Pater names success in life. We are all, he mourns,

under sentence of death, but with a sort of indefinite reprieve . . . we have an interval and then our place knows us no more. . . . Our one chance lies in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time. . . . With this sense of the splendour of our experience and of its awful brevity, gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch. . . . While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend. Not to discriminate every moment some passionate attitude in those about us, and in the brilliancy of their gifts some tragic dividing of forces on their ways, is, on this short day of frost and sun, to sleep before evening.

The quarrel is perhaps inconclusive between the two essentially different points of view: the view of those who regard emotion as subsidiary to practical performance, and who therefore congratulate themselves upon their possession of

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many reflexes, and that of those others who recommend intensity of living at almost any price—who recommend that you “give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass and simply for those moments’ sake.” But in any case it is this latter outlook that we are here committed to trying to understand; for it is the one to be generally presupposed as favourable for the development of aesthetic appreciation. And any condition propitious to that development is part of our present concern.

If practical education is the unlearning of consciousness—the gradual substitution of automatisms for deliberate performance—aesthetic education, if there be such a thing, is the *relearning* of awareness, the recovery of the excited, flooded consciousness of the child with its naïve curiosity, and wonder, and irrepressible gladness. And included in this as of very particular importance is the revivifying of feelings quite physiologically based, and the reacquirement of a conscious participation in all the body’s abundant life. Latter-day psychological and aesthetic theory has increased our understanding of the profound emotional significance of our organic functionings. We now realize that cognizance of heart-beat and breathing is not only a possible source of exhilaration for the savage or for civilized man in his more pagan moments, but that it contributes importantly to aesthetic enjoyment. This sense of heightened vitality may, as Berenson among others has pointed out, help to induce emotion of the most elevated sort.

The original stimulus for such increased vitality need not

have been a work of art. For most of us, indeed, the first experiences of this kind come very naturally and quite early, in the course of ordinary living. It is in the abounding years of childhood and adolescence that we pass through our aesthetic novitiate and from simple and intense pleasures induced by the healthy and powerful functioning of the body derive a foretaste of later, more mature, raptures. It might seem an extravagant generalization but it is sufficiently well-considered to be ventured: that only those individuals so constituted as to experience in youth a kind of pagan rapture from the intensification of bodily processes under the stimulus of walking, of running, of battling with wind or water under the wet sting of hail or snow, or the dry heat of sunshine, could ever become, in all after years, full candidates for the completest aesthetic delights. This saying carries with it no implication of a case to be made out for an exclusively physiological interpretation of spiritual experience. We have still the whole tale to recount of the provoking of imagination and delicious fancy; of the incursion of great sentiment and large ideas. It is here a question merely of the deep significance, for fulness of emotion, of the responses and activities of the human individual reacting in an almost animal way.

As for the question whether aesthetic sensibilities are capable of development, the thesis is here ventured that they most assuredly are: that we are no more doomed to remain within the narrow circle of our aesthetic loves and hates than of any other of our childish predilections. Artists are said

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to be born and not made; and probably within limits the same is true of the possessors of the lesser gift of appreciation. But to have had one's attention directed to some unperceived aspect of loveliness is many times to have travelled already more than half-way toward its understanding. What Gilbert Murray says of knowledge of one art in particular may be paraphrased to apply to that of all arts:

. . . in that inner world to which great literature belongs, a man may go on all his life learning to see, but he can never see all that is there; he can only hope to see deeper and deeper, more and more, and as he sees, to understand and to love.

For whether the old Socratic ethical doctrine be sound, that to know the good is to do it, the aesthetic adaptation of it—that to perceive the element endowed with beauty is to respond—is psychologically far more plausible. The primary means, then, to the desired result of enlarging and perfecting our enthusiasms is the rather simple device of arresting attention—of compelling a vivid awareness of what would otherwise have passed unnoticed.

A striking instance of such compulsion is the large healing of human sight that was accomplished by the impressionist school of painting. From all time shadows had by ordinary people been supposed to be grey. They were *seen* as grey because stereotyped expectation crowded out actually presented appearances. Protest in the interest of supposed accuracy and truth was therefore very naturally voiced against the vibrating gorgeous wealth of colour with which

the impressionists flooded the shadowed portions of their canvases—brilliant purple patches projected upon sunny corn-fields, violet and green and faint blue shadows laid upon rosy flesh. But the cure happily followed. Ordinary people too began to perceive similar tints in the natural world—demonstrating the deep truth of Oscar Wilde's witticism that instead of art imitating nature, it is nature that imitates art: nature, of course, not as it may be in itself, but as it is humanly perceived.

And rather generally the order of appreciation of these two worlds is just the reverse of what is usually supposed. We may admit understanding of art to be somewhat difficult of achievement but we tend to assume that the beauties of nature constitute part of man's birthright. And it is of course true that many pleasures in existent colour, shape, and sound are quite easily and simply enjoyed by many. But there is a deeper level of response, drawn upon by the really creative person as he surveys the world, which is not so readily procured—which for the majority is inaccessible without the simplifications, emphases, and selections supplied by the artist. For example, while we must all perceive shape after a fashion to have a recognition of things at all, an intense realization of the sublime austerities of starkly modelled forms is something which is probably vouchsafed to few of us unless we ourselves be artists, or have submitted to the leadings of some great master like Cézanne.

Again, while something of the beauty of light is realized by any one who has ever contemplated from a mountain top

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green sunny meadows over which cloud shadows pass, for most of us neither the thrilling violence nor the miraculous gentleness of light's gradations is really known until after an initiation through art. In fact, it is actually in the work of the sculptor more richly than in nature that matter is so cut and fashioned, so delicately modelled, so cloven into planes that light is caught and concentrated and reflected back in all its possible modulations. Or perhaps even more it is the architect who offers us supreme occasions for the apprehension of light and darkness: light intercepted, broken up by darkness; light moulded, bodied forth, revealed through darkness. But the painter too, by stern and exquisite choice of surfaces and forms, makes clear in a way we should find hard to do for ourselves what magic lies in the mere juxtapositions and interminglings of brightness and shadow. If as the result of the labours of the entire Dutch school no more had been accomplished for the world than this revelation, they would have justified their existence. As it is, a faithful apprenticeship in the form of an attentive study of their canvases is sufficient to send us forth fitted to traffic, unaided, for these high realizations—fitted even to pass the test of aesthetic responsiveness that an artist once cited: ability, before the sheer beauty of light and shadow cast upon an old shoe, to weep.

There is no sharp dividing line between the unimagina-tive mind and the creative. Furthermore, if it is true that by many persons little of nature is richly experienced without the aid of the artist, it is probably also true that no degree

of susceptibility precludes the chance of deriving new understanding through the revelations contained in an artist's imaginative version of reality. Just what the lowest denominator of aesthetic responsiveness would be, and what the highest, it is impossible to say. Perhaps mere animal nature ensures to every man at the very least a capacity for pronounced changes of mood—for vague excitements and vague depressions—in the face of certain terrifying, or quieting, or stimulating aspects of the world. It is so for the dog that bays the moon and for the bull that charges a red banner. But it is a far cry from mere brute-like susceptibility and that refinement of emotional and imaginative participation which occurs in highly developed aesthetic experience. We all know what the lesser response is like. Somewhat more precisely what the greater consists of we must now consider.

We may take as our starting point the assumption that all the impulses which lead to the making of art contribute also to its appreciation. This would cause us to anticipate, in the emotion aroused by a beautiful object, echoes of the ancient unrest and hungers which first drove mankind to creative expression: craving for power, and impulse to play; desire to imitate; reverberations from the incitements of sex; and yearning for self-expression, for escape, and for the exercise of the urge to lasting possession of all things cherished.

But the aesthetic experience is a unitary thing. It shows no tendency to break up into a number of independent elements. Like the work of art of which it is the correlate it is extraordinarily concentrated and coherent. What we should

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expect to find, then, would be these various elements, not lying side by side like threads of a spun fabric, but blended and interpenetrating. Furthermore, if art is the resolver of conflict the essential feature of aesthetic emotion as contrasted with every other variety should be its happy inclusion of elements in themselves contradictory and discordant. It should contain at once a quality of detachment and of complete surrender; of adventurousness and unexampled subjection to law and order, and manifestations of pride and humbleness, of fierce self-affirmation and utter docility, of achieved pleasure in the easy and the difficult, the simple and the complex, the strange and the familiar.

And all these elements are indeed there to be found—not as so many independently experienced satisfactions but merged in a kind of unified whole corresponding to that of the artist's original vision and to that of its imaginative objectification. Into the aesthetic experience are woven all the many emotions belonging to the various divergent impulses to which human beings are subject. For a work of art is so constituted that it can gratify those seemingly incompatible desires that we have already taken account of, providing in particular an unsurpassed means of sating the lust for adventure and the ceaseless need for attainment, after storm, of safe and quiet anchorage.

Among the traditional characterizations of the state produced by a beautiful object are two of special importance: the view that it means a breaking down of the distinction between subject and object; and the view that it is a condition

of unusual detachment. The two views are not unrelated, but the different emphases involved in their formulation call for separate comment.

Plotinus long ago noted the paradox that self-forgetfulness may sometimes lead to increased self-affirmation.

Such being our nature, we are most completely aware of ourselves when we are most completely identified with the object of our knowledge,

he observed. And certainly it is true that at least in aesthetic experience abnegation of self is rewarded by magnified selfhood: that brooding upon something quite other than one's own body and mind results in a re-discovery there of the deepest essence of one's being. If, then, it may be said that in the contemplation of art the distinction of the knower and the known in some sense lapses, at least this does not imply a loss of the subjective pole of the relation. It would be more nearly true to say that the appreciative observer is magnified at the expense of the object of his contemplation than that he is lost in that object. For while the experience of beauty is one of supreme discovery in which the discoverer is merged with what he finds, it involves the beatific illusion of free origination of what induces his rapture. First the artist is subject to the baseless conviction that in creating he finds rather than invents. Whereupon the appreciator indulges in the opposite fallacy of feeling that it is he himself who originates the pulses of rhythm by which he is invaded and through which he experiences a projection of his own will

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and emotion. The illusion is easily accounted for by the fact that art constantly fosters expectations which it thereafter fulfils. There is the further circumstance that a great imaginative work is actually a more perfect objectification of the desires of ordinary persons than they could possibly have contrived for themselves. It formulates with extraordinary precision what each feels he had already known—what he had indeed always longed to make articulate.

The other chief traditional diagnosis of the aesthetic state emphasizes its detachment. This is the character referred to by Bullough in his phrase "psychical distance." It is the character affirmed in the distinction repeatedly drawn between aesthetic disinterestedness and practical concern with the affairs of life. It is the character rejected on the other hand by I. A. Richards. To respond, he says,

not through one narrow channel of interest, but simultaneously and coherently through many, is to be *disinterested* in the only sense of the word which concerns us here.

But the notion of disinterestedness or detachment is ambiguous. If by detachment one means want of emotion, clearly the word cannot be used to designate the aesthetic state; nor if it implies absence of intense participation in the object attended to. One meaning, certainly, of detachment postulates absorption so great as to exclude even very insistent rival claims upon the attention. This implies not moderation of emotion but more than common excitement—focused, however, and cut off from overflow into contingent and prac-

tical responses. It implies contemplativeness as contrasted with activity.

But even this requires some qualification. For there is a respect in which aesthetic contemplation is one of the most intensely active of all states of which an individual is capable. Most certainly it involves, for body and mind alike, reproduction of the strains and tensions, the risings and fallings, the accelerations and retardations, of the work of art itself. Whether or not one agree that the artist's invention is imitative of things and events in nature there is no possible room for doubt that its emotional appreciation is thus thoroughly imitative.

It is imitative, moreover, in a quite literal way. Appreciation involves, of course, sympathetic echoing of the mood of the contemplated work. It involves a sympathetic projection of one's self into the situations and scenes, the personages and ideas and emotions set forth by the artist. But even more importantly it means, by virtue of bodily adjustment and strong motor response, a re-living of the patterns and rhythms with which all this content is invested. Of this motor phase of aesthetic reproduction the theory of *Einfühlung* takes full account. Translated as *inner imitation* and as *empathy*, the theory in all its forms is, for the psychology of aesthetic experience, a special development of the general physiological theory of emotion. But the full tale of the forms it has assumed at the hands of German, French, English, and American psychologists is too long to relate. The essential point

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is that, in one way or another, the motor element involved in the appreciation of art is recognized by them all.

And to any one who has ever examined critically the state of aesthetic enjoyment for the discovery of what it contains, it must appear incontestable that motor imagery, or incipient movements enriched by symbolic significances, or full-fledged muscular reactions, therein occur. One is compelled to agree with the defenders of the theory of *Einfühlung* that a perfectly passive, unimitative apprehension of a statue, a building, a lyric, a dance, a piece of music—even of an abstract shape—is quite impossible. Vernon Lee's description of appreciative perception of a jar can probably be verified by any one:

To begin with, the feet press on the ground, while the eyes fix the base of the jar. Then one accompanies the *lift up*, so to speak, of the body of the jar by a *lift up* of one's own body; and one accompanies by a slight sense of downward pressure of the head the downward pressure of the widened rim on the jar's top. . . . Moreover, the shape of the jar provokes movement of balance, the left curve a shifting on to the left foot, and *vice versa* . . .

Similarly with her observations on the conditions necessary for the appreciation of a statue:

We cannot satisfactorily focus a stooping figure like the Medicean Venus if we stand before it bolt upright and with tense muscles, nor a very erect and braced figure like the Apoxyomenos if we stand before it humped up and with slackened muscles. In such cases the statue seems to evade our eye, and it is impossible to realize its form thoroughly;

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whereas, when we adjust our muscles in imitation of the tenseness or slackness of the statue's attitude, the statue immediately becomes a reality to us.

From prolonged attention to the figures of the Parthenon frieze it is possible to derive powerful innervations of the muscles of shoulder and upper arm, of torso and thighs, as from lifting a heavy weight. But these muscular strains are not experienced as strains within one's own body. Indeed, if they are, the aesthetic illusion vanishes. They are perceived as occurring outside the body and in the figures apprehended, which acquire thereby a character of weight and importance, of tremendous dignity and solemnity.

It is perhaps in terms of the concept of play better than in any other that the aesthetic experience is to be characterized. For play involves a peculiar whole-heartedness of passionate participation at the same time that it exhibits a certain aloofness—a quality of unreality as of figuring in a dream that is known to be such. Lalo declares that the experience of art similarly implies a contradiction in us which is repugnant to purely logical thought: a voluntary illusion, a lie conscious of itself.

This transcendence in art of the categories of fact and fiction has been noted also by Collingwood. The aesthetic experience, he declares,

cares nothing for the reality or unreality of its object. It is neither true nor false of set purpose; it simply ignores the distinction. There is no such thing as the so-called artistic illusion, for illusion means believing in the reality of that

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which is unreal, and art does not believe in the reality of anything at all . . . This non-assertive, non-logical attitude is imaginative in the proper sense of the word . . . in imagining an object we are indifferent to its reality or unreality.

The imaginative, impractical attitude characteristic of play may be taken, then, as a mark of the aesthetic state. In combination with the several other feelings and attitudes already noted it seems to distinguish the appreciative experience of all works of art, whether these be describable as beautiful or sublime, as tragic or pathetic or comic. Corresponding to the special character peculiar to each of these species of value, one would expect the condition produced by them to exhibit corresponding qualitative differences; and this over and above whatever such experiences possess of common constituents. The feeling aroused by the sublime must surely be somehow different from that produced by the contemplation of simple beauty, and the emotion of the tragic different from either. If the feeling of the comic is also a species of aesthetic experience it would be expected to show even greater distinctiveness.

But to admit into the large genus of the aesthetic not merely the comic but also the grotesque, the horrible, and the pathetic, involves certain difficulties. Of all of these effects alike one may question whether they can actually be productive of an experience homogeneous with that of beauty itself. For the emotions peculiar to these perceived characters appear to involve some form of pain or distress, and what-

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ever else the aesthetic state may involve it must at least be enjoyable. The beautiful is indeed, by Santayana, defined as objectified pleasure. But objects belonging to modes other than that of mere beauty are objectifications of such emotions as sadness and fear, as surprise and even horror.

This problem of how the incongruous and disharmonious can mediate an enjoyable experience De Witt Parker calls the problem of evil in aesthetics. It is a problem that has been recognized by all writers since Aristotle; and various solutions of it have been suggested. Yrjö Hirn simply maintains the paradox, contending that in the pursuit of intense experience painful states are a source of pleasure; and he quotes many authorities in corroboration. Karl Groos introduces an important qualification to explain pleasurable pain. He observes:

When the course of the tragic tale is so far developed as to suggest that a catastrophe is imminent, it should also appear inevitable. Stern necessity must urge the hero toward the fearful goal so persistently that escape shall be unthinkable, a logical impossibility. This feeling of necessity is calculated to fix the aesthetic illusion, and consequently help on the effect by rendering more strenuous the mental tension and directing it so to inner imitation until the tragedy has culminated. In other words, fear of the catastrophe is so absorbing as to create the illusion that the apprehended event is just at hand, and consequently all sense of the painfulness of the situation is merged in the stress of this illusion, since it alone is competent to relieve the tension.



Photograph by Underwood and Underwood



Drawing by Hugh Foppes

II. METROPOLIS OF TOMORROW

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Santayana offers several reasons for the pleasure derivable from painful stimulation:

There is, in reality, no such paradox in the tragic, comic, and sublime as has been sometimes supposed. . . . We are not pleased by an evil; we are pleased by a vivid and exciting sensation, which is a good, but which has for objective cause an event which may indeed be an evil to others, but about the consequences of which we are not thinking at all. . . . We covet truth, and to attain it, amid all accidents, is a supreme satisfaction. Now this satisfaction the representation of evil can also afford. . . . There would be no pleasure in expressing pain, if pain were not dominated through its expression. To know how just a cause we have for grieving is already a consolation, for it is already a shift from feeling to understanding.

Here successively three separate explanations are given: that it is in spite of the evil that we are gratified; that evil as an important kind of reality is desired even for its own sake; and that imaginative objectification of evil changes it from a source of pain to a source of contemplative pleasure. And all these explanations are just. The complete reason for the stern and exalted joy in such a tragedy as *King Lear* includes them all and in addition many more. In that case, as in all other great tragedies, if the rendering of the painful events were less beautiful, or if they were made to appear less natural and necessary—as if foredoomed from all eternity as part of the inexorable order of the universe—they could not occasion that strange joy. Or if nobility to admire as well as disaster to deplore were not offered, the pain produced

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might be so great as to blot out all pleasure. But most important perhaps for the transfiguring of the tragic stimulus is the sense it gives of revealing what is very fundamental as well as very terrible. This opens to us deeper levels of understanding, and stirs more than wonted sympathetic responses. The pity and fear evoked cease to be mere human emotions and become, as it were, godlike. And this is what Aristotle seemed to mean by his theory of purgation.

The effect of tragedy is possible only where human issues are involved. In inanimate nature or in the lives of beings bearing no resemblance to ourselves we can find no occasion for tragic emotion. The experience of sublimity is differently conditioned. Kant considered the effect of the sublime to be found, not in art but only in the natural world. And for this opinion a strong case may be made out. There is even much to be said for denying the category altogether, and for distinguishing instead two species of the beautiful: an *austerer*, perhaps more intense, kind of beauty in addition to the sort ordinarily called by that name. But the issue tends to reduce to a merely verbal one. For as Schopenhauer, as Burke, and as a long train of commentators have maintained, there is an aesthetic emotion devoid of pain but pervaded by something like fear. For Kant there were two species of this emotion, called by him the mathematical and the dynamical sublime according to whether the feeling was produced by the perception of vastness or of power. In addition to these causes Burke lists a number of others: great suddenness of stimulation, and splendour; and all important privations—vacuity,

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darkness, solitude, and silence—but most important of all, the obscure or indeterminate. “To make anything very terrible obscurity seems in general to be necessary,” he observes; and he demonstrates the consequent advantage that literature possesses over the visual arts. Quoting Milton’s description of Satan beginning

He above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent
Stood like a tower,

he continues:

Here is a very noble picture; and in what does this poetical picture consist? In images of a tower, an archangel, the sun rising through mists or in eclipse, the ruin of monarchs, and the revolution of kingdoms. The mind is hurried out of itself by a crowd of great and confused images, which affect because they are crowded and confused . . . There is a passage in the book of Job amazingly sublime, and this sublimity is principally due to the terrible uncertainty of the thing described: *In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face. The hair on my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence; and I heard a voice: Shall mortal man be more just than God?* We are first prepared with the utmost solemnity for the vision; we are first terrified before we are let even into the obscure cause of our emotion: but when this grand cause of terror makes its appearance, what is it? Is it not wrapt up in the shades of its own incomprehensible darkness, more awful, more striking, more terrible, than the liveliest description, than the clearest painting could possibly represent it?

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As Burke observes, literature enjoys this advantage of obscurity over what is presented to the eye. And the same is true of whatever else makes itself known through hearing. In the rendering on the stage of Dunsany's *Gods of the Mountain*, the distant sound of thunderous footsteps is full of vague omens of alarm. No visible appearance could match in portentousness the stony tread of that unseen company. Their bodily entrance upon the scene is, in fact, felt as an anti-climax.

On the other hand, there are many objects devoid of the quality of the indeterminate which stir the imagination perhaps as powerfully as do the passages from the Bible, Virgil, and Milton cited by Burke. This is true of great designs such as Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* and Blake's *Ancient of Days*. And there are all the effects in the natural world that must be called sublime if we consent to employ the word at all—vast stretches of land and water, high mountains and the sky in storm.

But the important question for us here is less as to what may provoke the experience than what precisely that experience consists of. If fear is really present, as many assert, it is a fear that is transmuted into a species of exaltation. As Kant said there appears to occur a submergence of the lower, fearful, mortal self that is concerned with petty personal issues, and a triumph of a larger, more impersonal, kind of consciousness. The individual is elevated, as it were, to a higher level of being. This is what happens also in the experience of the tragic. In tragedy and sublimity alike the problem of the

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pleasure involved resolves itself into the problem of how it is that weak mortal man should acquire the strength necessary for achieving godlike delight in the very disintegration of his earth-bound self.

In the case of the many minor modes of aesthetic experience—those induced by the grotesque, the malignant, the horrible and by sheer pathos—the issue is the same that arises with regard to tragedy. In less acute form these pose the same problem of pleasurable pain. It is, moreover, the same kind of reasons that must be adduced to account for our delight in the gently sad or the slightly discordant as for the joy we find in the glorified expression of intense suffering. They start reverberations which make for a sense of intensified living. They provoke the imagination and supply grounds for enlarged vicarious experience. The very contrast between their pitiful or ugly content and the crystalline purity and loveliness of the forms by which that content is invested serves but to increase the effect of rarity and perfection. The blend of good with evil, like a white flower issuing from black soil, gives rise to a very special kind of loveliness. Then, too, depravity exerts upon the mind a slightly morbid but very stimulating compulsion. It stirs sluggish depths of feeling, primordial fears, and sorcerous nightmare horrors. The macabre and the sinister are provocative of many effects that enhance the total life of the emotions.

The aesthetic appreciation of the comic offers other and somewhat more puzzling difficulties.

Two main interpretations of the experience have been put

forward: what Max Eastman calls the derision theory, and the theory of benign humour. The most famous modern exponent of the derision theory is Bergson. In his opinion, as in that of Hobbes, who defined laughter as "sudden glory," the essence of the comic experience is its powerful inflation of self-esteem. We laugh *at*, not *with*; and since the largest chance for a sense of increased superiority comes from the degradation of one's own kind, man himself is the supremely comic object. His demotion to the status of a machine is the great occasion for the laugher's elevation to the status of an amused god. This is malignant humour. The opposite kind is eloquently described by Carlyle:

True humour springs not more from the head than from the heart; it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity, exalting, as it were, into our affections what is below us.

This is benignant humour: a laughing *with*, not *at*. De Witt Parker's synthesis of malign and benign humour—of the laughing *at* and the laughing *with* the comical object—constitutes a more adequate version. We may derive humorous enjoyment, he says,

. . . by adopting the point of view of the standard as our own, identifying ourselves with it, and through the contrast of ourselves with the object, we may take pleasure in the resulting exaltation of ourselves . . .

But the pleasure . . . may arise through our taking the opposite point of view—that of the funny thing itself . . .

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Sometimes the same object may be comical from both the points of view which we have specified; this is always true . . . in the most highly developed comedy.

And it is indeed true that we enjoy the spectacle of our fellow-man lowered to the status of an automaton; and that we also enjoy projecting ourselves into the instrument of his fall. We derive some pleasurable superiority from the discomfiture of the owner of a hat, baffled in his efforts to regain it. But we participate also with childish delight in the seemingly conscious gambols of that hat successfully evading rescue. But neither playful sympathy nor mere inflation of one's ego—nor even the combination of the two experiences—is the essence of the comic. As almost every writer on the subject has recognized, the chief or only outward cause of the sense of humour is the incongruous. Corresponding to this the experience itself must consist fundamentally of sudden joyful perception of that quality.

But this means that humour is the direct antithesis of poetry: for poetical insight is nothing but the sudden perception of the *congruous*. This congruity and incongruity alike are of feeling-tone rather than of idea. But the difference between poetry and humour is further accentuated by the fact that the more *disparate* the two ideas between which emotional *congruity* is discovered, the greater the poetic flight, while the more *closely related* the two ideas between which emotional *incongruity* is revealed the more acutely humorous the resultant effect. The most perfect metaphor seems to arise from the juxtaposition of two ideas having for

ordinary perception no similarity whatsoever. The most perfect joke seems to result from the sudden breaking asunder of two ideas which had appeared to be practically identical. How, then, in its complete opposition to poetry can the humorous be admitted within the domain of the aesthetic at all? Even more crucially than the sublime or the tragic, humour would seem to pose the problem of evil—the problem of how perception of discord can be the ground for a gratifying aesthetic experience.

Humour in the form of verbal wit would obviously constitute a more purely intellectualized form of art than any we have yet taken account of. And probably the highest type of humour always does involve, expressed or implied, this intellectual element. It thus offers an opportunity for a play of intelligence over and above that of sensory imagination. And, as in the enjoyment of the sublime and the tragic, appreciation of formal perfection is an important part of the experience. In further explanation there is the fact that the discords involved in a humorous situation are never serious. The mood of humour is and must be playful and light-hearted. Thus any pain involved is negligible. Furthermore, while the perception of beauty involves always pleasurable surprise supervening upon the pleasure of satisfied expectation—the arhythmic intruding into the rhythmic—in humour the order is merely inverted. Upon the stimulating shock of encounter with the unexpected there supervenes satisfied expectation—the rhythmic supplants the arhythmic. For the final effect of perfect humour is always one of rightness, of

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order, of the inevitable. Thus the beauty of poetry—or of any art—and the perfection of the comic are at least related as antitheticals.

Finally, the total experience of the humorous is, like that of the beautiful, something very rich and protean. It is an experience fed by satisfactions accessory to the delight attending the perception of happy absurdity. Two empty automobiles drawn up close together, tête-à-tête, as if engaged in earnest conversation, are comical because of the incongruous suggestion involved. And jokes on marriage, religion, education, and the state owe their primary humorous quality to the same circumstance. But, as Spencer maintained, we also find in all these cases opportunity for relief from the tension of excess energy; and as Eastman held, chance for the perennial child in us to gratify the desire for play; and as Freud asserted, coveted occasion to make a dash for liberty—to take, in William James's felicitous phrase, "a moral holiday." When the laughter of play, of release, and of exuberant self-affirmation is thus added to the laugh of humour itself we attain a very large and mellow experience, an experience that combines the exercise of intelligence, the ribaldry of brute nature, and the divine all-comprehending merriment of dwellers upon Olympus.

"Strictly speaking," says Collingwood, "all experience is aesthetic . . . and no experience is purely aesthetic. . . ." For the attainment of the highest that the beautiful, the tragic, the sublime, and the comic have to offer in the way of emotional appreciation, much is required of us. And few are

endowed richly enough to meet these requirements. After a fashion we need to possess the sensibilities and imagination of the artist himself. We need a low threshold of responsiveness, fancy, large vitality, depth of emotion and wideness of experience. We need to be enamoured of all the basic elements of existence—with space and time, matter and motion. We should be able to respond vividly to silence as well as sound, to darkness no less than light. We should possess appreciation for rare cadences and for exquisite line, for symmetries and balance and the provocations of blended rhythm and the arhythmic. Since few enjoy the full endowment, few can attain the voluminous emotions which would otherwise be possible.

But at least sometimes most of us may participate, however tremulously and imperfectly, in the great experience. Even if it be but rarely, we have intimations of what the full awakening of sense and imagination and understanding might bring. By immediate encounter with it we may know that beauty is to be found lodged in things ephemeral and things enduring, in the strong and in the weak; that it can take up its abode in the whirlwind and be heard also in the still small voice. From personal experience we can testify that beauty may render unearthly a common moment and transfigure with sudden radiance things long since faded and familiar. We may feel its brimming gladness that belongs to yellow flowers and singing birds and sunshine, and know also its vast solemnity. We may gain from it the exultation of a more than human strength and glory, and the abasement

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as well of a humble sharing in a sacrament. It is perhaps only in terms half-mystical that the experience itself at its most perfect may be indicated, as in the words of the mystic of old who said:

This is the spirit that Beauty must ever induce, wonderment and a delicious trouble, longing and love and a trembling that is all delight. For the unseen all this may be felt as for the seen; and this the Souls feel for it, every soul in some degree, but those the more deeply that are the more truly apt to this higher love—just as all take delight in the beauty of the body but all are not stung as sharply, and those only that feel the keener wound are known as Lovers.

But what the encounter with beauty, either in its serene or in its more austere and tremendous forms, really means, not philosophers nor saints nor even artists can after all explain. To each one is left, as a not accountable nor even altogether describable state, the sudden illumination and ecstasy that great beauty may evoke. We cannot say what precisely it is that befalls us, making miraculous the shape or sound that is the seat of the vision and conferring upon it the quality of the eternal. Nor, in the last analysis, is there much assistance to be got from others in making ready for that breathless initiation. Like birth and like death the journey must needs be solitary and by a way uncharted—

. . . a flight of the Alone to the Alone.

CHAPTER XI

BEAUTY AND THE AESTHETIC ESSENCE

TO SAY, not what something is, but what it is not, is one way of drawing closer to it. And some things are too dazzling or too terrible to permit any other manner of approach. The mystic who tries to recount his experience of God finds himself compelled to resort to this method. No positive characteristics that he can summon are commensurate with his vision; but by steadily withholding the attributes that define and limit he contrives to build up a vague apprehension of something ineffable. The vast nebulous Thing which thus emerges out of an encompassing darkness is more portentous than it could possibly be were it not nameless.

For the lover also, who would try to say what love is, there can be no surer way than—with all the ardour of passion, of tenderness, and of pain—to declare only what love is not. Each epithet that he would bring to the telling of that strange, bright, blind enchantment he may well cast away as false to the incommunicable wonder of the thing he would invoke. Finding the equal insufficiency of calling it sweetness or a great agony and foreboding, of calling it unappeasable

hunger and yearning or a divine repletion, he must have recourse at last to a denial of all attributes belonging to every other thing on earth.

For the uttering of the unutterable, naming of the nameless, this way of negation would seem, then, to be the only way. And confronted, as we are here perilously confronted, with the elucidation of that most perplexing thing, Beauty, it might appear that we too, like the lover and the God-intoxicated, would need to take this same path out. But there is open also another way: that of saying neither what beauty is, nor what it is not, but simply where, when wanted, it may be found. Avoiding the folly of attempting to isolate it from those things upon which, like softly falling snow, it has miraculously descended, we may sometimes at least find knowledge of it simply by tracking it down to where it gives itself: an unnamed fragrance, an incredible iridescence, a flutter of wings.

For the quality of the beautiful appears somehow not to be composed of anything simple or peculiar to its own nature. All the objects that have ever been found possessed of loveliness in the end yield up their attributes to become merged in the very concept of beauty itself. In the heat of its alchemy even the least of them

suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.

Beauty has appropriated the magic of all exotic and mysterious places: of the Nile and the Ganges, of Babylon and Nineveh, Tyre and Bagdad, Carthage, Troy, and Jerusalem.

Something of its glamorous quality is borrowed from the allurements of Cleopatra and Iseult and Helen, of Guinevere and Dido, Beatrice and Aspasia. It has stolen from the charms of Semiramis and Cressida and Eloise, of Leda and the Magdalen and Aphrodite. Heroes and kings, gods and sorcerers, lovers and saints, have added likewise to its content. It would not be the same bereft of the imprint of Adonis, and Merlin, and Galahad; of Osiris and Baldur; of Siegfried and Prometheus and Apollo.

But not the only locus of the more easily discovered kind of beauty are places and people, legendary and remote. Beauty resides in many of the simple and immediately experienced qualities of the world. It reverberates sometimes in the thunder, and makes itself audible in rain and in the lapping of water upon the shore. It is what chokes the breath at the moment when crickets and frogs and the mournful cry of the whip-poor-will initiate the long slow chorus of the night. It is to be found in simple colour, as that of noon-day within sight of the shining church at Assisi, with all about the blue, blue Umbrian hills undulating, rippling, vanishing into the far horizon; or in that of a great storm, as once upon a time at Tivoli where, against purple and black clouds embroidered with lightning, stood spectral olive trees, grey-green, and in the lurid grass blazed the fierce scarlet of poppies. Beauty may pervade even qualities of texture, of temperature, and of fragrance. To encounter in the chill of a grey dawn the swooning odours of syringa and honeysuckle is to know beauty, even though it be of low degree. To

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witness a solar eclipse in the depth of winter, with the vanished stars returning about the staring blackened image of the sun, and all things congealing in the appalling frigidity, is to experience beauty under its extreme aspect of the sublime.

Also accessible and simple is the rarer beauty of white magic, cold and frosty, with the shimmering quality of fairy-tale and naïve legend—the thin, clear, sexless beauty of the seraphic. In all the arts we find its shining trail: in the music of Mozart and Debussy, and in the young virginal madonnas of Fra Angelico; in delicate ivory carvings and in tapestries embroidered with unicorns and birds and slim white horses. It pervades the canvases of Memling and of many child-like, enchanted early German masters. It is found in moonlight glittering on new-fallen snow, and in the quivering uncertain shadows cast by growing things, pallid and frozen in the moon's brightness. Its colours are white and gold, azure and silver and faint rose; and the aroma of it is of the flowers of lavender. Its sound is in the note of the flute, in Pan's pipes, and in the light laughter of all sylvan creatures. It is in the fine shrill sweetness also of boys' soprano voices. In one of William Blake's Songs we find what is very nearly the quintessence of this order of beauty:

How sweet I roam'd from field to field
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld
That in the sunny beams did glide!

He show'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

It is in *Aucassin and Nicolette*, and in the tales of Malory. There are traces of it in *The Blessed Damozel*—indeed, in many of the poems and pictures of the Pre-Raphaelites. And in the ecstatic invocation to the New Jerusalem it is present in unadulterated purity.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

Our Lady sings *Magnificat*
With tones surpassing sweet;
And all the virgins bear their part,
Sitting about her feet.

But the direct beholding of beauty, inviolate in its natural dwelling place, is not always vouchsafed us. Sometimes it entrenches itself in a refuge too lofty and remote for our gaze to reach. More often its excessive nearness is what prevents our looking upon it. Walking the surface of our globe we cannot directly see its earthly shape, nor its brightness reflected from the sun and streaming outward to the stars. To





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know these things we must look away from the ground we walk on and upward toward the sky. In lunar eclipse we may behold the earth's actual lineaments, though as a circle of shadow only, upon the face of the moon. And again upon that moon when it hangs, a crescent of gold in the west, we may detect our very earth-shine, overspreading the empty orb of shadow clasped within the sharp, bright horns. It is in such wise that some modes of beauty can be received by us obliquely only—as a reflection, an image, an echo, or even simply as the form of a symbol.

Too near sometimes to contemplate, at others too remote, much of beauty cannot but elude our too easily dazzled and always weak perception. Happily, therefore, between ourselves with our very little strength of vision and of hearing, and beauty in its elusiveness, intervene the inventions of the artist. All art is a staff for our weakness, a shield for our defencelessness. It substitutes the artist's entranced vision for the objects themselves that fed his rapture. As we contemplate his state, by a kind of contagion the agitation is communicated to us. When the poet says

Just now
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. Why am I grown
So cold? ¹

then to us too come intimations of unspeakable portent, as from the rending of a veil.

¹ Reprinted from *Verse* by Adelaide Crapsey with permission of and special arrangement with Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers.

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I had forgotten how the frogs must sound
After a year of silence, else I think
I should not so have ventured forth alone
At dusk upon this unfrequented road.

I am waylaid by Beauty. Who will walk
Between me and the crying of the frogs?
Oh, savage Beauty, suffer me to pass,
That am a timid woman, on her way
From one house to another! ²

And for us also there is momentary consternation as from
thunder and abysses of space inhabited by stars.

Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle: she died young.

And in the suffocated brevity of the utterance is made plain
the shining beauty of a mortal countenance, quiet in death.

Beauty, then, however evasive of description and impossible of isolation from what it adheres to, is a quality that over and over again we encounter. In devious or in direct ways, in nature and in the inventions of the artist, we are subjected to its inescapable enchantment. At last from many repetitions of the experience we may even become ready to venture some doctrine as to the character of those things in which it is supremely manifested. It is such a doctrine of the irreducible essence of the beautiful that we must now attempt to formulate. To be in any wise adequate it should be sufficiently flexible to include all the aesthetic modes as well as beauty in its narrower interpretation. It should throw light

² From *Second April*, published by Harper and Brothers; copyright 1921 by Edna St. Vincent Millay.

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upon the imaginative experience of mystic and of lover—of all creative individuals, indeed, including, pre-eminently, the artist. Most of all it should pierce to the innermost core of art itself and from it elicit whatever that is which constitutes aesthetic essence.

The suggestion has already been ventured that poetry at its purest is quite simply metaphor—a startling juxtaposition of unlike regions or orders of reality thrown into sudden relief by a momentary illumination like sharp lightning that guides us across the seemingly untraversable gulf between. The great body of poetic metaphor we have moreover envisaged as a hierarchy of four stages in which successively bolder transitions of this kind are accomplished. What, building upon this version of merely a single art, we are now to propose to ourselves as a possibility is that the crucial concept for the interpretation, not of poetry only but of all forms of art whatsoever, is that of metaphor.

Now, metaphor itself is but a very special case of intuited resemblance. And relating of terms on the basis of a perceived resemblance of some kind is involved in every variety of mental operation, even the most unimaginative. Moreover, outside the domain of art proper the more imaginative sort of assertion of similarity is sometimes discoverable. One instance of it was Newton's dazzled realization that the falling of an apple is a member of the same genus of events as the moon's cleaving to its orbit. This supreme insight may in fact quite readily be termed metaphorical, for it brings into vivid juxtaposition domains that for ordinary perception

appear devoid of all relation. Exactly like a poetical image it is a creative synthesis of two ideas in which each is retained, but reborn, as it were, into a new estate and glorified by its garb of fresh and unforeseen significance.

What may properly be denominated metaphorical effects are to be found profusely in all mythology—that form of imaginative expression appearing among the earliest of the works of man. Perhaps more frequently than any other notion occurs there the essentially figurative idea of a merging of two levels of being: and in particular animal and man, and man and the divine or the demonic. Centaurs, fauns, mermaids, satyrs, chimaeras, harpies, were-wolves, griffins, and the minotaur and the Gorgons, Cerberus and the Sphinx, are among the motley products of this obsession. Likewise all the metamorphoses of Greek legend; and Satan's assumption of the body of a reptile. Vishnu with elephant head is of the progeny, and the eagle-headed winged men and the man-headed winged bulls of the Assyrians. All the monsters conceived by the human imagination testify to a very profound feeling for the weird beauty and strangeness to be found in whatever departs from its own order and borrows from things alien. The "beasts full of eyes" of the Book of Revelations, and the beast with seven heads and ten horns bear witness to it; and Siva, double-headed and with myriad arms. Angels, archangels, and all similar flying creatures, are clearly derivative from the notion of the blended orders of the bird-like and the unwinged. Of the same import are the traditions common to widely scattered peoples of beings

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whose parentage is mixed—the progeny of an unhallowed union of man and demon; or of a hallowed union of man and god. Yet other instances of this same intuition of an over-leaping of the barriers separating radically different levels in nature are the tale of Lot's wife—a human woman transformed into a pillar of salt; and Daphne's conversion into a laurel tree. In song and story, in sacred writings and in the profane fabrications of poets, these imagined beings have been given to us.

But if prose no less than poetry may render through narrative this idea of a fusion of different species or of successive levels of life, what of the possible passage to and fro between the countless other opposed domains: the real as over against the unreal; the corporeal as contrasted with the incorporeal; and the visible and invisible, sleeping and waking, living and dead? Can the art of novelist and dramatist in its dealing with all such opposed categories be said to yield effects of antitheses culminating in transitions and identifications—effects properly describable as homogeneous with those of true metaphor?

That the thing is at least possible may be affirmed on the basis of a single extraordinary example of dramatic writing: the play by Pirandello entitled *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. This work in its entirety is nothing less than a sustained and tremendous metaphor. What is rendered is the gradual transition into full actuality of persons known at the outset to belong in the domain of the imaginary. During the earlier stages of the action these characters are suspended

between the two domains, strangely partaking of each, while being drawn ever insidiously closer to the abyss across which there can be no ordinary, earthly passage. At last, in the terrifying conclusion we witness their escape from the ghostly status of fictions into the community of fleshly sentient beings. In a few brief moments we behold the epitome of the stupendous drama of creation: as portentous as the first dim stirring of life in the slime of a primaeval ocean; more thrilling than any conception of the vivifying hand of Jehovah upon the body of the first ancestor of the race. Like the experience of all metaphor, the realization of this miracle of an assimilation of the fictitious to the actual and corporeal is accompanied, as it were, by the rending of fetters. For us, as for the agonized creatures whose metamorphosis we witness, there is the pang of eclipse, with after it a new incarnation.

But dramatic rendering of this perhaps most startling kind of clash—that of the real and the unreal—is not peculiar to Pirandello. It is the effect striven for in all ghost scenes, and when attained it constitutes one of the high moments of dramatic art. The mad scene in *Boris Godounov* is an instance of it. The demented king is aware, at a particular spot in empty space, of an impalpable presence, recoils in horror from it, hurls at it whatever he can lay hands upon. It is as if he were endeavouring to cast across the gulf separating the living and the dead, things appertaining to the world of the flesh; as if he were about to accomplish either

the materialization of his terror, or to make ghosts of things tangible and visible.

In these dissimilar cases, then, of the mongrel beings compounded by the early makers of mythology; of Pirandello's characters that belong to two worlds; and of the visible rendering by a great actor like Chaliapin of the encroachment of the ghostly upon the existent, the primary effect is that of metamorphosis—metamorphosis imminent, in process, or already accomplished. And the effect is also precisely that characteristic of metaphor. This means that not in isolated and rare instances only but in all cases alike of successful narrative, metaphorical effects should be forthcoming. For metamorphosis of one kind or another is the eternal theme of all fiction.

This follows as an inevitable consequence from the underlying conditions of narrative as such. Itself temporal, it is incessantly concerned with time's passage through the world of existence. And for all things actual, elapsing of time means a stealthy corroding or enriching, a cheapening or deepening of character. For a thing or a person to endure through time is to be transformed. The process of transformation is what every inventor of narrative may be said, then, to be primarily concerned to depict.

Now, it is perhaps the most radical and most wonderful of all possible transformations that Pirandello is preoccupied with in the play just cited: but besides the lapse from the status of the unreal to that of the real are a multitude of

other possible lapses, each possessing its special potentialities of dramatic effect. There is the change to which all human beings are subject—gradual passage from youth to maturity. There is the transformation involved when commonplace experience becomes flooded with transfiguring light, or when dreams give way to disillusionment: when a man or a woman undergoes the process of falling in love or of falling out of love. There is the pitiful and inescapable effect of bloom and beauty vanishing in the heat and weariness of life's way. And all the varied effects of the encroachment of disease, physical or mental: loss or acquirement of sanity or madness, of sickness or health, of salvation or damnation. There are the changes attendant upon the assumption of new rôles—paternity, or maternity, or positions of power over other individuals. And there are all the spiritual changes involved in bereavement, in failure, in shame, and in the terrified awareness of encroaching death. In art, as in life, the same persons can in some sense be said to endure from day to day, from year to year of their history, retaining a kind of identity even through the flux of ever-changing attributes. But it is also true that all persons, whether real or fictitious, undergo an unceasing process of assumption of new characters. And it is this process that the writer of fiction endeavours to portray.

The conceiving of a character, or the development of a plot, thus reduces to the contriving of effects describable in no better terms than those of metaphor. Metaphor is the essence of fiction no less than of pure poetry. In poetic metaphor an object receives the baptism of beauty, not by virtue

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of its possession of any quality belonging to the things of one realm only; its imaginative effect is the result of that strange alchemy by which the essence of one order is blended with the essence of another. Never in its repose in either realm does the baptismal fire and dew descend upon it, but always as it floats above the chasm that keeps the two apart, as it hovers, palpitating, over the intervening spaces. But all this is also true of the personages conceived by the great writer of fiction. His renderings of human life possess a beauty baffling and elusive, giving the breathless effect of steep and perilous flight, the tremor and throb as of an alighting from a far journey. Not any simple identity inhering in his characters, but their mysterious and unceasing assumption of new essences is what produces the cataclysm of the spirit which accompanies that suggested imaginative transition from any domain to a neighbouring but different one.

If the sphere of metaphor may be thus widened to include the vast art of literature, its still further widening is conceivable. Perhaps metaphorical effects are not peculiar to verbal utterance, but may be given in plastic terms as well? We might not at first thought suppose so, for there are too many ideas which, though communicable through language, seem to be untranslatable into visual imagery. No pictured version of the Daphne legend, for example, renders adequately the really terrifying lapse of two degrees—from the human level down to the vegetable.³ Could an artist working in the medium of paint or stone possibly be expected to do

³ See illustration 44.

with the eerie concept of the faun or any kindred creature the kind of thing that Hawthorne managed to do by means of narrative? Or would it seem possible through plastic forms to evoke the mystery of man's passage into insanity or into the abode of death? or that of his catastrophic experience of salvation or of damnation? The particular effect of ecstasy appropriate to a vision of Paradise, the particular kind of horror that should attend the vision of Hades, is difficult enough to produce through any medium, even the most propitious.

In our earlier analysis, first of aesthetic substance and then of aesthetic form, we recognized that in the arts of painting and sculpture no less than in those of literature a kind of duality, a principle of antithesis, had to be admitted to be everywhere present. The ruling principle of structure we found to be the unceasing blend of the rhythmic and the arrhythmic; and as their content we found the plastic arts employing all the basic paired concepts such as space and matter, light and darkness, motion and motionlessness, living and lifeless. But the recognition of all this did not lead us to any postulation of an interplay between antithetical notions as constituting the very essence of all great pictorial and sculptural effect. It is this postulate that we must now scrutinize.

Of all notions those of heaven and hell might seem to be the most incapable of being imaged. And it is indeed true that their direct rendering into visual terms has most frequently resulted in an effect of the inane or the ludicrous.

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But there is possible even for the painter and the sculptor what might be called an indirect rendering of things visible. They may depict not the terrifying or ineffable objects themselves but their effect upon a living countenance. And this is precisely what Piero della Francesca elected to do in his representation of the Resurrection. The picture is a revelation of death and of the region of the damned, given, not directly, but by means of their prostrating consequences upon a face with human lineaments. Every detail conspires to accentuate the effect of mystery concentrated in the horrified eyes of the newly risen Christ. The guards are sleeping, unconcerned alike with earthly and unearthly happenings, their careless oblivion adding by a kind of irony to the sense of an unwitnessed cosmic calamity; and the scene is lighted by the wan light of very early morning. The being just escaped from the grave, transported, lonely, with an infinite speechless desolation, is a complete incarnation of the words: "He descended into Hell." Intimations of that unimaginable journey upward again reside in the haggard, ravaged face, but most of all in the eyes within whose sight appears to be gathered the concentrated woe of all creation. It is a vision of Hell itself that we are here vouchsafed.⁴

Difficult of achievement as the effect might appear, there are also innumerable renderings in visual terms of the several kinds of lapse from level to level in the hierarchy of life: the vegetable, the animal, and the human. Over and over again, on canvas and in stone, we find the mysterious effect

⁴ See illustration 45.

of a living form possessed of the baffling quality of simultaneous affiliation with the things of two orders: its proper order and another either below or above it. And, as we should expect, when the transition is an upward one—from vegetable to animal, from animal to man—the quality is that of the sublime; when it is downward—from the level of the human to the subhuman, or from the brute to what is yet more primitive—it is attended with the horror that attaches to all collapse and degeneration. The first of these effects Blake more than once achieved. He gives it in a small sketch of a child gazing into the face of a horse; and again in the painting of the Expulsion in which the lost Eden is guarded by four horsemen. In both pictures the focus of interest is in the eyes of horses. In these appears an awareness of those interspaces of existence in which is taking place the miracle of brute creation passing with terrible birth-throes, terrible fear, into the fellowship of man. The horses are neither entirely animal nor yet human but in a strange state of transition between the two orders of life.

And again and again, in animal sculpture, we derive similar intimations of an affiliation of the brute world with the human: horses, dogs, and elephants, beasts of the jungle and great birds, which with all their animality suggest imminent passage into a domain other than their own. There is a ram carved by some nameless Egyptian which gives the effect with especial power and fearfulness.

In the portrayal of human faces also is given repeatedly a similar suggestion of the lapsing of the hidden conscious-

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ness into some region inaccessible and unbelievably remote. Up and down the centuries are countless renderings of this kind: faces carved in lucid marble, or traced in faded tempera, or resplendent on canvas. The chief reason for their profound effect is that, physically quite real and immediate, they yet are spiritually far away. Present and yet elusive, at once near and infinitely remote—their embodiment of this paradox is what accomplishes such seduction of our imagination, such ravishment of our emotion.

A remarkable instance of the effect is to be found in the faces of the three queens standing amid a multitude of attenuated figures in the west portal of Chartres cathedral. Huysmans rapturously describes them, saying of the first that she maintains

the recollected attitude and austere mien of the cloister, and watches day and night with far-off gaze . . . for some one who for seven centuries has not come.

The second he calls "that strange princess at once more carnal and more spectral than her sisters." But it is the third which is the loveliest of all that crowd of figures, tallest and most queenly in the long fluted folds of her garments. She smiles, like so many of the faces carved by the early French sculptors—queens and angels, boyish saints and madonnas—the little baffling inward smile divulging an altogether heavenly vision. Huysmans says of her that

she remains forever mysterious, a creature angelic, fluent, conversant with the pure rapture of a soul that lapses into

God, and withal leaving with us the illusion of a healing gesture, the phantasm of a visible benediction for those desiring it.⁵

It is similar faces, dream-laden and deeply meditative, entranced and aloof, that we are offered by countless other artists—Greek sculptors, Chinese painters of portraits, and Holbein, and Donatello, and the Sienese. But nowhere do we find this thing in such miraculous completeness as in the pale faces of Botticelli's women.⁶ In the eyes of the *Madonna of the Pomegranates*, of the Madonna with two angels, of the seraphic creatures of the Villa Lemmi frescoes, and of the Venus, is the far-away intentness betokening profound immersion in incalculable dreams. Much of what Pater has attributed to the half-sinister face of Mona Lisa belongs far more truly to these exquisite beings, part child, part angel, that yet are burdened with a weight of understanding too great for their frail beauty to support. Theirs are the heads "upon which all 'the ends of the world are come,' and the eyelids are a little weary." Theirs is a beauty "wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions." Theirs is the burden of such wistfulness as belongs only to the very young, with eyes and lips fair and fresh as the earliest flowers of spring, yet melancholy almost with the subdued and gentle melancholy of old age. Upon their blossomy radiance lies like a film of shadow—or as the last fine

⁵ See illustration 46.

⁶ See illustration 47.

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bloom of their ripeness—the incredulous comprehension of what their marvelling eyes behold. Themselves lovely, with a loveliness surpassing all accounting, they yet mediate an experience of a beauty even greater than their own—a beauty more potent for being withheld and hinted at only.

Like the elusive and strange queens of Chartres cathedral these madonnas communicate the startled sense of their simultaneous occupancy of two utterly diverse regions of existence. For as in the case of a metaphor rendered through poetry the aroma of their beauty comes to us as upon wings, floated from some nameless region neither of heaven nor of earth—some such uncharted place as the abode of the Epicurean gods that the poet tells of: a

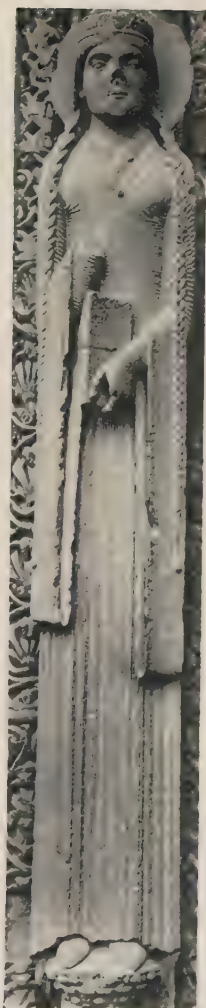
lucid interspace of world and world
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm.

This is the secret of their compelling beauty, as of that of all people and all places that the painter or the sculptor may depict: that what it alights upon belongs not to a single order of things but partakes of the life and ways of two realms, alien and removed. To simple and ordinary minds the things and beings transfigured may appear lodged inescapably within the boundaries of one of these realms only. It needs the imagination of the artist to detect the two-fold nature, the double habitation. It needs his skill to elicit from

the seemingly simple object the effect of the metaphorical; to procure for us metaphor made plastic.

Architecture and music are now alone left to us to take account of—the two arts which constitute a goal of absolute and self-sufficing expressiveness toward which all other arts approach. In their shared preoccupation with abstract forms bearing no resemblance to any of the things of earth these two final arts appear oblivious of the actual world of conflict and contradiction from which are generated the antitheses with which the other arts all deal. We may well feel faint-hearted as we pose the question as to what clash and assimilation of unlike elements provide for these the means to a possible metaphorical effect.

That it is in terms of some stupendous overpassing of frontiers that the essence of both architecture and music must be expressed we can entertain no reasonable doubt. Of all the preceding arts we have found the supreme imaginative achievements to result from the sudden juxtaposing of dissimilar domains. Not quite ordinary or literal metaphor can we anticipate in the two climactic arts of untranslatable discourse; and yet the spirit of metaphor should there be at work, metaphor in its shining nakedness, rid of all earthly trappings, freed from the last impediments of finite limitations. For it is the same world, the same human needs and conflicts that gave rise to the other arts, from which these arts also spring. It is not a different web upon which their patterns are woven but the same, albeit of more radiant texture, the product of more subtle and etherealized spinning than that





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employed by the arts that went before. The rhythms that pervade the two arts of pure form are the very rhythms which sculpture and painting incorporated in their imposing of structure upon the things of the world, the very rhythms which prose and poetry laid hands upon to adorn their impassioned speech. The fact that those rhythms when manifested in the self-sufficient abstract arts of matter and of sound are rhythms purified of fleshly entanglements cannot mean that these arts must be accounted for by totally new laws. What final revelation of the creative principle contained in metaphor may we hope, then, to find that architecture and music alike vouchsafe?

The way to an answer may well be found, not through ranging far afield over hitherto unconsidered domains, but by a new viewing of something very close at hand with the outward aspects of which we have repeatedly been concerned: rhythm itself and its strange and provocative, its ever novel and mysteriously gratifying blend, in art, with the arhythmic. In some way not yet taken account of, the overpassing of boundaries, the convergence of unlike regions of being that might constitute for architecture and music a content homogeneous with metaphor may consist of nothing other than this old alternation between order and disorder, between the predictable and the unpredictable, the familiar and the unknown.

For rhythm and arhythm must be something more than underlying principles of artistic structure—something more even than conflicting elements within the consciousness of man. Not in art nor even in the human body and mind does

the contrast of the rhythmic and arhythmic originate. The stupendous clash is in the universe itself, in the length and breadth and unguessed antiquity of that inscrutable organism which has all space as its habitation and comets and suns as the molecular components of its bodily structure.

It is first the rhythmic antitheses which enter into the substance of the arts that we there discover: light and darkness, heat and cold, motion and rest, sound and silence, sleep and waking, life and death. The vast shuttle of existence weaves them eternally, blending their antithetical colours and composing a rhythmic pattern from their juxtaposed threads. Day follows night, summer comes in the train of winter, youth gives way to age, female answers to male, seedtime leads to harvest, and birth to decay. Moons revolve in orderly courses about their planets, planets in harmonic distribution attend their suns, the entire galaxy whirls as it moves onward—and all in rhythmic sequences, all in a hierarchical system of constantly augmented periods. The histology no less than the anatomy of the universe exhibits these spirals and ellipses and orderly processions. The atoms themselves of which all things are composed are subject to mathematical laws of rhythmic recurrence and to regularity of number and proportions in their elements. The forms of snail-shells, the arrangement of petals upon their stems, the beat of insects' wings, the ripple of water and the returns of the tide are conformed to the same scheme of recurrent alternations and symmetries. The very numbers themselves which are the invisible warp of the existent world manifest rhythmic regular-

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ity in their ascending decades and centuries, cyclic and spiral formations in their ascending squares and cubes. They are subject to formulae whose rigid and encompassing laws enjoy an austere and resistless dominion over all that is numerable.

Omnipresent orderliness would seem to be the prevailing character of our universe. But there is another side to the picture. Across the rhythmically recurrent, the law-abiding, the predictable, lies the vast shadow of the chaotic. Into the inmost sanctuary of order disorder insinuates itself. Seemingly continuous sequences are found to be broken chains, and the repeated is never a return of the exactly identical. Never under identical circumstances can ice break up in the spring-time, or winter overtake the earth. Never twice after the same fashion may a plant put forth its blossoms, or day follow night. Moons and planets, subjected from moment to moment to constantly changing attractive forces, can by no possibility pass twice over the same orbit. And within the very number system yawn appalling chasms which at least not yet have been explored and accounted for. Alien and incorrigible members of that disciplined army, the prime numbers stand, a defiant battalion, couriers perhaps of an unconquerable reign of chaos. Pervading the entire creation are to be found these manifestations of the lawless, of the unique—progeny, it may be, of inchoate and intractable matter, or it may be instead, herald of divinity. They are of the very stuff of the cosmos, no less than the ascending spirals and octaves, hierarchical sequences, and level upon level of rhythmic recurrence.

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From atom to stellar system, from unicellular organism to man, from the impalpable figures and forms of arithmetic and geometry to the most substantial of existent realities, there prevails this blend of the regular and the irregular, of rhythm and the arhythmic—a vast panorama of the most basic of paired antitheticals. Order extends its sway over disorder, disorder in turn intrudes with its savage, its brute, its sub-organic defiances into the domain of the harmoniously organized. And the function of art, of all art, is to echo in its own terms this universal conflict. An imaginative invention cannot but be an image of man; but beyond that, and perhaps even more profoundly, it must be a recapitulation of the essential duality of existence of which the human organism is only one particular version.

Like all the other arts, employing in their formal design rhythm blended with the arhythmic, architecture and music reproduce the omnipresent interplay between order and the unordered. But in their peculiar self-sufficiency, in their unconcern with mere earthly objects and events, they are in a position to do more with this cosmic antithesis than to reflect it in their outward sensuous structure. In a far more inward and basic way they may lay hold upon it. It is indeed their high office to penetrate to the innermost core of that antithesis, and in their unlike and abstract but sublimely simple and moving terms to embody it as their own very substance.

This, then, is the metaphor which in their unique idioms music and architecture proclaim. The two contrasted domains between which each of these arts contrives a mysterious and

unearthly passage are no other than the profoundly opposed aspects of the universe itself. Even a single upright column, or an arch, a tower, a portal, exhibiting stability against the force of gravity and asserting the ethereal law of symmetry in the midst of inert and intractable matter, is a symbol of the dual character of the world in which it stands. Even a single note echoed by its octave, at once astonishingly the same and astonishingly diverse, is an abstract epitome of the omnipresent interplay of novelty and identity, of individuality and the principle of recurrence. Down to its uttermost parts but yet more fully in its magnificent completeness, a masterpiece of architecture or music is a synthesis of these seemingly irreconcilable tendencies which pervade all that is—source of the ceaseless cosmic ferment and fruition. A tomb, a palace, a cathedral, by their marriage of the corporeal with the incorporeal, and their perfected blend of rhythm with the arhythmic embody and thereby render articulate the metaphor inherent in reality itself. Throughout their masses, whether sombre and brooding or lyrical and triumphant, they render it, by domes and pinnacles directed skyward and soaring rocky flanks; by balanced strains and tensions of sloping roofs and firmly rooted piers and buttresses—by all their intricate exploiting of empty space, of contending light and shadow, of massive stone miraculously subdued.

And it is the same metaphor—an encroachment and reconciliation of the antithetical principles of discord and harmony—which music likewise embodies. In a fugue, a sonata, or a symphony, the theme, constantly recognizable yet scarcely

ever quite the same—transposed, transformed, altered in pitch, in key, in tempo—is a recapitulation of that colossal opposition of principles and forces which the world in its entirety exhibits. Great music is the precise incarnation, impeccable and final, of the omnipresent web of uniformity and variety, of the predictable and the unpredictable, of cosmic order and ever imminent, ever resurgent, chaos.

Between the brute universe from which man takes his origin, and art which is his product, intervene the body and mind, the flesh and spirit, of man himself. Mysterious enough is the manner in which the corporeal and incorporeal in man the imager are echoes, but more than echoes, of the tensions and rhythms, the symmetries and asymmetries of the cosmos from which he issues. The other mystery, surpassing perhaps the first, is the manner in which, by magnificent assertion of himself in his unrelenting search for the absolute, man contrives through art an embodiment of that universe and of his own being—but beautified, harmonized, rendered at last perfect. Through all his channels of expression: through love, through religion, through exercise of his creative intellect, he is able to achieve a partial self-articulation. It is in art alone that he can attain to full freedom and adequacy of expressiveness. And in the hierarchy of the arts it is not in painting or in sculpture—not even in poetry and drama—that he experiences the complete unshackling of his creative powers. This comes only in his invention of architecture and music, in which utterance is no longer in terms

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of simulated earthly objects—or even in those of verbal metaphor, the highest attainable level of human speech.

In the last analysis it matters little, perhaps, whether we designate the opposed elements of cosmic meaning by the names necessity and freedom, rhythm and the arhythmic, the imagined and the unimaginable. For these terms are all alike inadequate symbols of the things themselves. The significant, the unquestionable, fact is that whatever the ultimate domains that complete knowledge would usher us into, it is the un-earthly passage from one to the other, back and forth in ineffable flight, that the two arts of pure form procure for us. Our human species has devised architecture, and through its materials of colossal cloven stone we know a means of uniting orderless inert substance and empty space with the eternal order of abstract geometry. And music is our own, a miraculous fusion of goalless movement and disembodied sound with incorruptible rhythm and the wordless language of the spirit. It is in these two arts that man draws nearest to a vision of the ultimate metaphor; it is in these that he very nearly accomplishes the feat of giving utterance to the unutterable.

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